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English Edition  
of Nicotian. ...  
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the dear souls  
... (1882 ...)

# HOME LIFE IN RUSSIA.

(Nikolai V. <sup>Andreevich</sup> Gogol).

BY

A RUSSIAN NOBLE.

REVISED

BY THE EDITOR OF

"REVELATIONS OF SIBERIA."

(Henry Tyn. A. Spooner).

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,

SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1854.

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**LONDON:**  
**Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.**

## P R E F A C E .

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IN laying before English readers a Work, of which the scene is exclusively laid in Russia, and which, it is confidently anticipated, will be recognised as furnishing a most interesting and graphic account of the manners and customs of a very extraordinary nation, the Editor considers it his duty to devote a few words to an explanation of the circumstances connected with the publication of these volumes.

The Work is written by a Russian nobleman, who offered the MS. in English to the publishers, and the Editor's task has been confined to altering such verbal errors as might be expected, when we bear in mind that the



Author has written in a language which is not his own.

The story may be said to be unique. It gives us an insight into the internal circumstances and relations of Russian society, which only a Russian could afford us. The Nodrieffs are an exceptional class, whose type is peculiar to a half-civilization where a blow is accounted as no disgrace, and "giving the lie" imparts no stigma. And yet men who quietly pocket such insults, we find are tolerated in good society, and, strange to say, are not thought the worse of on that account. The Napoleonic dictum, "*gratitez le Russe, et vous trouverez le Tartare,*" is in this instance most fully verified. But we will not spoil the reader's enjoyment by any further intimation of the persons, whose acquaintance he will make while perusing the following pages. The author affirms that the story is true, and that the main facts are well known in Russia. There is hardly a class of Russian life and society which is not introduced upon the scene, and the Author displays their foibles with an unsparing hand. Still he must not be regarded

as an enemy to his Fatherland: he acts under a salutary impression that the *exposé* can do no harm, and may possibly effect some good: and if he have such good fortune that his book obtains access into his own country, we feel sure that its truth will be immediately recognized, and its severity pardoned, at least by those not in authority, on account of the Author's strenuous exertions to do his part manfully in ameliorating the condition of his fellow sufferers in Russia.

In conclusion, we may regret that we are not at liberty to mention the author's name—not that the work itself requires any further verification, for its genuineness is avouched by almost every line—but the truth is, that the writer is still anxious to return to his native country, and is perfectly well aware that the avowal of his handiwork and such a display of his satirical powers, will not serve as a special recommendation, except, possibly, as a passport to the innermost regions of the Siberian wilds.

With these preliminary remarks, the Editor begs to offer "Home Life in Russia" to the

English reader, as a worthy companion to the "Revelations of Siberia," and as adding one more to our scanty list of books which throw light upon the domestic life of our 'ancient allies' and present foes.

LONDON, 1854.

# HOME LIFE IN RUSSIA.

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## CHAPTER I.

ONE fine summer's afternoon a few years ago, a pretty, neat-looking, but small spring-britchka, drove into the court-yard of an inn, in the governmental town of Smolensk. The vehicle was one of that peculiar description to which bachelors, retired colonels, staats-capitains, and landowners, rejoicing in the possession of about a hundred-and-fifty *souls*, give the preference for travelling purposes ; in short, all those who in Russia are called "gentlemen of the middle rank."

The traveller who occupied the high seat in this convenient conveyance, was a man, who at first sight could not have been taken for handsome, yet we should do him injustice were we to affirm the contrary of him, for he was neither too stout nor too thin; it would also have been impossible to add that he was too old, as little as it would have been right to call him youthful. His arrival in the above-named town created no particular sensation, and, indeed, it took place without the occurrence of anything unusual or even extraordinary; two Russian mouzhiks, however, who were standing before the door of a dram-shop on the opposite side of the inn, were apparently making their strictures and observations, but which, were confined to conjectures concerning the britchka, not upon the gentleman occupying the carriage.

“Dost thou see it?” said the one to the other, “there is a wheel for you! what do you think of it, would it break or not, supposing it had to roll as far as Moscow?”

“It might stand the journey,” replied the other, musingly, as he scratched himself sedulously behind the ear.

"But supposing it was on its way to Kazan, I think it could not stand the wear and tear of such a distance?" said the first speaker again.

"It will never roll into the ancient Tatar fastness," responded his friend somewhat affirmatively.

Thus ended their learned conversation, the scientific depth of which we will not venture to explore. But previous to the britchka being stopped by its driver before the entrance door of the inn, a young man had happened to pass; he was dressed in a pair of white, very tightly-fitting, and extremely short, twill inexpressibles, buttoned up under a dress-coat of the most fashionable cut, and from under which a snow-white linen shirt-front visibly displayed an elegant bronze pin of common Tula manufacture, representing a weapon in the shape of a pistol. This young gentleman turned round, and also honoured the travelling-carriage of our stranger with a hasty glance, at the same time adjusting his hat upon his head, to guard it against the attack of a sudden gust of wind, and then—turning upon his heel, he too went his way.

When the carriage had entered the courtyard, and stopped before the principal entrance

of the inn, the traveller was welcomed by the head-waiter, or saloon-walker, as this class are commonly called in Russian hotels,—so lively, and spin-about a fellow, that it was actually impossible to look him in the face, or, in consequence of his mercurial evolutions, to recognise even the outlines of his features. He now came running out breathlessly with a napkin over his arm. He was all one length, without symmetry or the slightest appearance of proportion, and wore a long demi-cotton jacket, which nearly fitted his back instead of his waist; he shook his head, and made his long hair, which was cut *à la mouzhik*, fly in all directions, and led the stranger quickly up-stairs through the long range of wooden galleries of the inn, and showed the fatigued traveller into the apartment, which, by the decrees of the hotel authorities, he was to occupy.

The room was much the same as such rooms usually are, because the inn was of a similar character, *i.e.*, such an inn as is to be found in all provincial towns of the vast Russian Empire; where, for the sum of two or three roubles, during the course of twenty-four hours, the weary traveller is accommodated with a

comfortable room full of beetles, which, like blackberries, peep out from every corner ; another door led into an adjoining bed-room, always barricaded with a chest of drawers, or a washing-stand, and occupied by a peaceable and silent neighbour, whose predominant propensity is a lively and irrepressible curiosity to ascertain all he possibly can about the private and public affairs of the new comer. The exterior of the building was in strict harmony with its interior : it was extremely long, and two stories high ; the lower portion was not whitewashed, but was permitted to display its brownish red bricks, that had grown dark with years, and looked gloomy and dirty, not only from the sudden changes of wind and weather, but because they had no doubt been originally of a peculiar dirty tint. The upper story was painted all over with the eternal yellow, a colour so fancied and admired in Russia ; on the ground-floor there were several small shops, in which harness, leather, cords, crockery, and cake of all description were displayed to the best possible advantage.

In one of these above-named shops, in the corner one, or rather at the window belonging to it, a dealer in heated mead-water, was stand-



ing close to his samovar made of bright copper, and it so happened, that he had a face as red as his samovar, so that at a distance, one might have easily fancied there were two self-boilers standing at the window, had it not been for the fact of one of the samovars being ornamented by a jet-black, long, flowing beard.

Whilst our gentleman traveller was examining the room allotted to him, his luggage and other effects were brought in. First of all, his portmanteau, originally made of white leather, but now looking somewhat old, and testifying to the fact that it had been more than once on the road. This portmanteau was carried in by the coachman Selifan, a man of middle stature, clad in a toulup, and the servant Petruschka, a brisk, handy fellow of about thirty, dressed in an ample, shabby-genteel coat, evidently cast off from the the shoulders of his master. He also was a man of middle size, apparently of a sulky nature at first sight, with very broad lips and a large nose.

After they had deposited the portmanteau, they brought in a small mahogany travelling box, inlaid with ebony and other ornamental woods, a pair of boot-legs, and a cold fowl,

carefully wrapped in a piece of brown paper. When all these effects were properly located in their respective places, the coachman Selifan left the room with the intention of looking after his horses, whilst the servant Petruschka began to make his arrangements in a small adjoining ante-chamber, very dark and much like a dog-kennel, into which he had already succeeded in conveying with him his travelling cloak, together with a peculiar odour of his own which was also common to a large bag of his, containing a variety of articles, forming the indispensable toilet of a travelling servant. In this same dark dog-kennel he fixed against the wall as well as he possibly could, a shaky, three-legged bedstead, and stretched upon it something not unlike a mattress, but as meagre and flat as a pancake, and perhaps not less greasy. This mattress, however, he had obtained not without some difficulty, from the landlord of the inn.

During the time that these servants were thus busily engaged in making themselves and their master comfortable, the latter had himself descended into the reception saloon.

What character these so called reception-rooms bear—many of my readers, who have

travelled in Russia, will know perfectly well—everywhere the same walls, painted in oil-colours, darkened by the smoke of stoves and tobacco in the upper parts, and greasy from the backs of visitors and travellers in the more accessible regions below; the walls are principally thus disfigured by the resident tradesmen of the town, who, on a market-day will gather together in friendly groups, to take their usual quantum of tea, and talk over business and things in general. There are the same grimy ceiling and glass-lustres with their numerous prismatic ornaments dangling around them, shaking and ringing whenever the head waiter runs across the room over the worn-out carpet, whilst swinging about his tray fearlessly and in the most acrobatic manner imaginable, though it be covered with cups and saucers like the ocean shore with sea-gulls—the same pictures all around the wall, painted, of course, in oil; in a word all was here similar to what it is elsewhere, the only striking difference worthy of notice was perhaps a painting representing a nymph with such an enormous bosom as undoubtedly my reader has never seen. Similar fancy portraitures of nature's bestowings, how-

ever, make their appearance in many historical pictures, which, heaven knows, at what period, from whence and by whom, have been brought to us into Russia, and exposed to our view. Sometimes indeed, we have to thank our aristocracy for them, who as admirers and patrons of the fine arts, commission their travelling couriers to purchase them in Italy and elsewhere, according to their taste and judgment.

Our hero took off his travelling cap and liberated his neck from the close embrace of a woollen rainbow-coloured neckcloth, resembling those which a dutiful wife will knit with her own fair hands for her beloved husband, and present it to him with the necessary instructions how to tie it and untie it; as for bachelors, I really cannot say whose kind hands knit such ties for them, but for my own part, I never had the fortune to wear such neck-wrappers in my life. After having freed himself of his woollen tie, the gentleman ordered his dinner to be brought to him.

Whilst various dishes were being served up to him, such as are customary in Russian hotels, as for example; stchee, or cabbage soup, with small meat pies, especially prepared—and

indeed always kept ready for all travellers and for many weeks in advance—calf's head and green peas, sausages and greens, roast fowl, salt cucumbers, and the everlasting sweet flour tarts, continually ready and in store; whilst, as we before said, all these good things were being displayed before him, either cold or warmed up, he amused himself by addressing various questions to the head-waiter, inquiring who the former hotel-keeper was and who the present, what the expenses were, and how large the income was, whether the landlord was a thorough rogue or only partially so, to which the head-waiter would invariably reply: "Oh, yes, Sir, a great scoundrel, Sir!"

Thus, then, as is the case in civilized Europe, there are also in civilized Russia, a great many respectable people, who cannot eat their dinner in an hotel, without speaking to the waiter, and who even cannot forbear passing a joke or two upon him.

However, our traveller did not limit his inquiries to apparently unimportant matters, but he also and with wonderful circumspection and in due rotation inquired of the head-waiter who the Governor of the town was, after the names

of the Presiding Magistrate and the Imperial Procurator—in a word, he did not omit any of the higher officers of the crown, but even tried to ascertain with as much precision as possible, if not with complete success all or any information he could elicit as regarded the most important and richest landowners of the vicinity, how many *souls* or peasants each of them might possess, how far out of town he lived and what his character and disposition were, and how frequently he came from his country-seat to visit the town. He also inquired very minutely about the condition and health of the environs, whether that particular government had been visited by any contagious diseases, such as epidemic and other fatal fevers, the ague, cholera, and similar plagues; and all this was asked with such apparent solicitude, and the replies were listened to with such marked interest as to make it quite obvious that simple curiosity was not the only motive that prompted him to put all these various questions.

In his manner there was something sedate and solid, and he had a habit of blowing his nose very noisily indeed, and though it is impossible to say how he contrived to do so, it

must be admitted that the noise was something similar to a blow through a hautbois. This, in itself apparently, quite harmless habit had, nevertheless, the good effect of attracting the more particular attention of the head-waiter, who, each time he heard this singular noise, at once shook his head and made his hair fly in all directions, whilst straightening his frame and bending down his bust in a more respectful inclination, he asked the stranger if he wished for anything else?

After dinner, the gentleman took a cup of coffee and seated himself upon the sofa, and to increase his comfort he put a cushion behind his back; and cushions in Russian hotels, instead of fine and elastic wool are generally filled up with something not unlike bricks and pebbles; upon this the stranger yawned once or twice, and then wished to be shown into his apartment where he lay down and slept soundly for about two hours. After this refreshing siesta he rose, and wrote upon a slip of paper, accordingly to the regulations of the establishment, and the request of the head-waiter: his rank, profession, christian and family name, for the due information of the police authorities.

Upon this paper, the head-waiter whilst hurrying down stairs, spelled with as much agility as he was capable, the following : " Councillor of State, Pavel Ivanovitch Tchichikoff, landowner, travelling for his own amusement and affairs."



## CHAPTER II.

WHILST the head-waiter was still engaged in decyphering the words written on the slip of paper, Tchichikoff left his room and went into the street, to examine the town, with which he evidently appeared to be pleased ; for he, no doubt, found that it in no way yielded precedence to any other governmental or provincial town of the Empire : the yellow colour was strikingly predominant upon all the stone edifices, whilst a more modest dark grey hue was thickly diffused over all the wooden buildings. The houses were of regular and irregular construction, of one, two, and one a-half stories high, with everlasting balconies, of course very

pretty according to the good taste of provincial architects. In some places, these houses appeared as if lost in midst of the plain-like large streets and their interminable long wooden garden-enclosures; in other places again, they were huddled together, and here life and commerce were more perceptible.

Some of the sign boards, though many were washed clean by heavy rains and snow-storms, displayed here and there a well painted cake, a pair of Suwarrow boots, or a coat and pair of inexpressibles, with the inscription "tailor, from Paris;" then again a hosier's shop, exhibited hats and gloves, stockings and night-caps, with the superscription: "Arsenieff Philipoff, foreign merchant;" on another house might be seen a very large sign-board with a billiard-table painted upon it, and two players in dress-coats, such as the *dramatis personæ* wear in an after-piece, when they enter as "guests," upon the stage. The players on this sign-board were represented in the act of aiming at a ball with their cues, their arms slightly bent backwards and rather ill-shaped legs, as if they had been in the act of making an unsuccessful attempt at an *entrechat*. Under this billiard-table was written in large

characters : " And here is the establishment."

Here and there a man or woman was hawking wares about the street, or selling them at a stand, such as nuts, apples, soap, and cakes—which bore a striking resemblance to soap ; then again a coffee and tea-shop, or eating-house, with a large sign board outside, with an enormous fish on it, in the back of which a gigantic fork was stuck, like an harpoon in a whale. Most frequent of all were the double-headed and swarthy looking Imperial eagles spreading their protecting wings over the entrance of the numerous taverns with the laconic inscription, "dram-shop." The pavement was in a bad condition everywhere. The curiosity of Pavel Ivanovitch Tchichikoff, the Councillor of State, went even so far as to honour with a minute inspection the public garden of the town ; he found the trees very scrubby and scantily planted, taking feeble root, leaning for support against three posts in the shape of a triangle, and very neatly painted with green oil-colour.

Although these trees were not much higher than common reeds, yet they were mentioned and described in the newspapers on the occasion

of the last illumination of the town in the following exceedingly complimentary style : " Thanks to the munificence and protection of our Governor-General, our town is being rapidly embellished, and has again been endowed with an additional ornament—a public garden—full of shady and broad-leaved trees, spreading their protecting branches against the oppressive heat of the day, and it is very gratifying indeed, to witness how loudly the hearts of the good citizens beat, and their tears of gratitude flow in acknowledgment and gratitude towards our Lord-Lieutenant and Governor."

After asking the policeman on duty the nearest way to the parish-church, the town-hall, and the residence of the Lord-Lieutenant, Tchichikoff went to take a walk near the river, which flowed through the centre of the town ; on his road thither he happened to pass a lamp-post, from which he tore off a play-bill, which was flapping loosely ; no doubt with the intention of reading it with more leisure, when at home ; he looked attentively at a lady of rather elegant appearance who was passing along the wood pavement the other side of the street, and who was followed by a little page in a military livery, carrying a

large bundle in his hands ; once again he cast a long and general glance around him as if with the intention of familiarizing his memory with the position of place and streets, and then went straight home to his room, slightly assisted by the ever attentive head-waiter, during the process of getting up-stairs.

Having had tea, he sat down before a table and ordered a wax candle, produced the torn off play-bill from his pocket, and bringing it closer to the light, he began to read it, slightly closing his right eye. However, there was nothing remarkable in the play-bill : one of Shakespeare's dramas was to be performed ; the part of Hamlet was allotted to a Mr. Matchaloff, and that of Ophelia, to Miss Assenkova, the other dramatis personæ were of indifferent reputation, and for that reason less interesting ; nevertheless, Tchichikoff read them all, and got even as far down the list as the price of the pit and gallery, and discovered that the bill had been printed in the governmental printing-office of the town.

When he had perused the whole, he turned the bill and examined the other side of it, to see if there was by chance something more to

read, but finding nothing, he wiped his eyes and folded the bill carefully together, and then deposited it in his mahogany travelling box, into which he was accustomed to put anything, and everything he could lay hold of. The day, we imagine, was concluded with a plate of cold veal and ham, a bottle of sour Crimea-wine, and in a sound night's rest—all in one breath—as we express ourselves in some of the extensive towns of the broad Russian Empire.

The whole of the following day was devoted to paying visits. Tchichikoff went out to pay his *devoirs* to all the important officers and *employés* of the town. With hat in hand, he waited upon the Lord-Lieutenant, who, on closer inspection, proved to bear a great resemblance to Tchichikoff himself, for he was neither too stout nor too thin; but he wore the decoration for merit of St. Anne round his neck, and it was whispered about that he might shortly be honoured with a presidential star; however, he was a good-natured man, and even sometimes found leisure and pleasure to assist his lady in embroidering upon canvass.

Tchichikoff next went to present himself to the Vice-Governor, the Procurator, the Presid-

ing Magistrate, the Commissary of Police, the Public Contractor-General, the Inspectors of the Imperial manufactories—our memory fails us, and we regret it; but in excuse we may state that it is rather difficult to remember the different grades of the all-powerful of this wicked world; it will therefore suffice to say, that our traveller displayed an unusual activity as regarded the visits he paid on that particular day. We will conclude a notice of them, by stating that he even went so far in the marks of his civilities, as not to forget to pay his compliments to the Inspector of the Surgical division and the Town-architect. When he had performed all these obligations, he was still sitting and musing in his britchka, and meditating whether he had not omitted any one; but really, there were no more officers of the crown to whom he could have shown his attentions.

In his conversation with these omnipotent personages, he contrived, very cleverly, too, to say to each of them separately something either laudatory or complimentary. To the Lord-Lieutenant he insinuated the flattering observation, that the entrance into his Lord-Lieutenancy was like that into Paradise, and that the roads

were everywhere even and smooth as velvet, and that those governments which appoint so trustworthy managers merit the highest praise. To the Commissary of Police he expressed his admiration of the watchfulness and the civility of the policemen under his orders, and in his conversation with the Vice-Governor and the Presiding Magistrate, who had no higher rank than simply "councillors of state," he made an adroit mistake by addressing them twice as "your excellency," which of course pleased and flattered them amazingly.

The results of his praiseworthy attentions were, that the Lord-Lieutenant immediately honoured him with an invitation for that same day to an evening party *en famille*, whilst the other officers of the crown invited him, the one to dinner, another to a game of whist, a third asked him, as a favour, to come and take a cup of tea, and so forth.

About himself, our friend Tchichikoff obviously avoided saying much, and if he spoke of himself at all, it was but in very general terms indeed, and with an undeniable modesty; his conversation, in such instances, assumed rather more of a learned phraseology and expression.



Thus he would remark, for instance, that he was the most insignificant worm that crept over the surface of this world of trouble and deception, and therefore quite unworthy to be an object of particular notice; that he had seen much, and acquired a great deal of experience during his life; that he had struggled and suffered in the service for the just cause; that he had many enemies, some of them even capable of preying on his very vitals; and that now, exhausted by fruitless contests, he was longing for tranquillity, and in search of a modest corner, where he might pass the remainder of his career in quiet and retirement; and, finally, that in passing through this beautiful town, he considered it to be his bounden duty to testify his respect and admiration to the magistrates of the place by waiting upon them. This was about all that the *élite* of Smolensk could learn touching the strange face that had arrived within the walls of the town, and which strange face did not fail to show itself that very same evening at the *réunion* of the Lord-Lieutenant.

The preparations for this evening party occupied our hero considerably above two hours,

for he devoted such unusual care and attention to his toilette as, we venture to say, is perhaps seldom witnessed. Having enjoyed a short but sound after-dinner nap, he ordered fresh water to be brought in to him; he then began to wash very carefully both his cheeks, using soap very freely, and putting his tongue against each of them in turn—to tighten the skin, no doubt; then, taking the towel from off the shoulder of the officious head-waiter, he commenced rubbing and drying his full face, beginning from behind his ears, yet he did not do so without sneezing twice, and directly into the face of the clever head-waiter.

Having performed this operation, he took up his position before the looking-glass to adjust his shirt-front, and to abbreviate two hairs which protruded from his nostrils, and soon after he was shining in his glory and a dress coat of light coffee-brown colour with bronze buttons.

Thus tastefully and elegantly attired, he seated himself in his own carriage, and drove off through the interminable and dimly-lighted streets. The house of the Lord-Lieutenant, however, was illuminated as if for a regular

ball ; all the carriages that arrived had their lights ; two *gendarmes* were maintaining order in the entrance-hall ; in the distance were heard the loud yells of coachmen and footmen—in a word, all was as it ought to be. On entering the reception-room and *salon*, Tchichikoff was obliged to close his eyes for a moment, for the brilliancy of the lamps and lights, and the dresses and toilette of the ladies, were literally bewildering. All was one blaze of light. Black dress-coats were flying about in all directions, separately and in heaps, as flies will do around a sugar-loaf in the middle of a hot day in July, when the grumbling old housekeeper is cutting it into square, sparkling pieces before an open window ; little children, if any, will gather around her, and watch with intense interest and curiosity the movements of her bony hand, raising in measured time the active hammer, whilst the airy brigade of flies, carried along by a whispering zephyr, approach her fearlessly as conquerors, and, taking advantage of the rays of the sun, which dazzle and dim her sight, besiege the tempting bits in small and large divisions. As they have been already abundantly nourished by the dainties of a fine summer, and at each

flight desert some rich meal for another, they do not descend upon the sugar to feed, but come there with the intention of showing themselves, of parading up and down upon the sweet heaps, of rubbing their fore or hind legs against one another, or of performing the same process with their airy wings, and again stretching them out, and scratching their little heads, then turn round and fly away, only to return again, after joining a new and perhaps more numerous detachment.

Tchichikoff had not yet recovered from similar effects and reflections, when he found himself surrounded and soon after arm-in-arm with the Lord-Lieutenant, who introduced him at once to his lady. But even here our new guest did not lose his countenance; he said something complimentary, suitable to the circumstance, and very *à-propos* for a man of his—the middle age—of a rank neither too exalted nor too insignificant. When the dancers took up their positions for a first set of quadrilles, the non-dancers were obliged to fall back towards the wall. Tchichikoff was among them, and did as they did by putting his arms behind him *à la Napoléon*, and for about two minutes

he appeared to pay the greatest attention to what was passing before him.

Many of the ladies were dressed with good taste, and in the latest fashion, while others again displayed robes and jewels, such as could only be got in the shops of a provincial town. The gentlemen also, here as elsewhere, could be divided into two distinct classes: to the first belonged those who were tall, slender and thin, and who are always found buzzing around the fair sex; some of them even were of the same description as those we are wont to see in the *salons* at St. Petersburg; they wore their whiskers in the same studied and carefully-brushed manner, or had the oval of their faces carefully and neatly shaved; they were familiar with the same easy manners in presence of ladies, and they also spoke French fluently; they knew how to amuse and make the ladies laugh whether they liked it or not, just exactly as the fashionables do in the imperial capital.

The second class was composed of bulky and stout men, such as our friend Tchichikoff, that is to say, of the middle size, who could neither be called too stout or too slender. This latter description of gentlemen was always

anxiously engaged in avoiding too close a proximity with the fair sex, and looking about right and left with the intention of espying, if possible, whether the servants of their host had not already prepared a green cloth table for a game of whist. Their faces were round as a full moon ; upon some of them pimples and warts were visible ; others again displayed the marks of small-pox ; and as for their hair, they did not wear it in curls, brushed *à la Titus*, or cut *à la diable m'emporte*, as the French call it ; their hair was neatly arranged or smoothly brushed down ; and as for their features, they were rather round and strongly marked. Such men as we have described were the right honourable dignitaries of the town of Smolensk.

It is a curious fact that men of such frame know better how to manage their little affairs in this world of trouble and disappointment than those who are tall, slender or thin. Slender men are appointed in Russia—perhaps also elsewhere—as special commissioners, or are generally selected for such an office ; they are to be met with, here, there and everywhere, somehow or another. Their existence is rather

too easy, airy, and not at all calculated to be depended upon. Stout men, on the contrary, never accept doubtful or ambiguous appointments. They all grasp at something more substantial; and if they take up a position in life, it always proves to be a safe and a profitable one, and though the foundation may sometimes shake under their weight, they themselves are not to be unseated. They hate outward display and refinements; their coats may perhaps not be of the best fit or the latest fashion like those of the slender gentlemen, but in compensation, their money bags are filled with the blessings of providence.

The slender man may, after three or four years of extravagance, not have a single serf to mortgage at the Imperial Bank, whilst the stout man's glance is calm and satisfied, for somehow or another, he has saved sufficient to buy a modest cottage in some snug corner of the town, of course in the name of his wife—this attracts less attention, and is done for greater safety; for, in another snug corner of the same town we find another comfortable house belonging to the same stout man,; also, at a later date, he

builds a villa in the environs, and finally makes the acquisition of a whole estate with all its appurtenances.

Thus then the stout man, having served God and the Emperor, and gained universal esteem, retires from public service, leaves town for his estate, and becomes a farmer, a landowner, a real Russian gentleman, a regular, what we call in Russia, *bread and salt man*—he lives and he lives well indeed. But when he has done living, then come again his slender heirs; and in the Russian fashion, they spend in a race all the wealth, goods and chattels of their stout parent.



## CHAPTER III.

WE will not attempt to conceal from our reader that reflections like those which concluded the last chapter preoccupied the mind of our friend Tchichikoff, at the time when he was casting his eyes around the company before him; the consequence was, that after mature consideration, he closed in with the ranks of the stout men, where he met with faces he was already acquainted with—the Procurator with his dark and heavy eyebrows, who was continually winking his left eye, as if he meant to say, “Follow me into the other room, my friend, and there will I tell you something.” However, he was a serious and sober-minded man; next

was the Commissary of Police, a middle-sized man, but sharp and acute, and with all that a philosopher; the Presiding Magistrate, a very judicious and amiable man, who was met by every one with much affability, and treated like an old acquaintance. Tchichikoff bowed low to all of them in turn, though rather lower than they had done, but not without something pleasing in his peculiar mode of salutation.

In this group of men he also made the acquaintance of Mr. Maniloff, a landowner of agreeable and polite manners, and of Mr. Sobakevitch, also a landed proprietor, who at first sight appeared of rather stiff, if not of clumsy carriage, and who, whilst replying to the civilities of Tchichikoff, accidentally trod upon his toe, saying at the same time, "I beg your pardon." After these introductions, he was presented with a playing card, and invited to join a game of whist, which he accepted as a matter of course, with his usual bow of politeness.

The players took their seats around the green table, which they did not leave until supper-time. All conversation was strictly prohibited,

as usually happens when the mind is given up to serious occupations. Although the Postmaster was generally a talkative person, yet, from the instant he felt the cards in his hands, he ceased to be so, and his face assumed the expression of a meditating philosopher. He compressed his upper lip upon the lower one, and kept them in that position nearly during the whole time the game lasted. If he played a court card, he could not help knocking audibly with the knuckles of his hand upon the table, and whispering at the same time, if it was a queen, "off starts the pope's wife:" if it was a king, "here goes the mouzhik from Tambov!" To this the Presiding Magistrate would coolly reply; "And I will have her! And I shall pull his beard."

At the same time, and whilst playing a trump card, or knocking against the table, various expressions were made use of, such as, "Ah! *bilá ne bilá!* I don't know what to play, so I come out with a diamond;" or simply exclamations of, "Hearts! heartlings! spades! spadelings! club! clublings!" and a variety of other words, epithets and names, with which

they had christened in their own immediate circles the various colours of the playing cards.

At the termination of their game, they had as usual in such cases, a few disputes, which they settled in rather a loud voice. Our guest and friend, Mr. Tchichikoff, of course took part in the dispute, but he did so with considerable ability, and so well, that though every one heard him protesting, yet all were obliged to agree that he did so with very good taste indeed. He never said, "you played this or that card," but "I believe you were pleased to play the ace," and "I had the honour of covering your knave, Sir," or something equally civil. And in order to convince his opponents still more upon the subject of their argument, he invariably presented to them his silver snuff-box, on the bottom of which they could perceive tonquin-beans which were placed there on purpose to increase the flavour of his snuff.

The attention of our stranger was particularly attracted by the two landed proprietors, Maniloff and Sobakevitch, of whom we have already had occasion to make mention. He availed himself of the first favourable opportunity to take

the Presiding Magistrate and the Post-master aside, and tried to learn from them all the information they could give him about these two gentlemen. A few questions and answers which passed between them, showed that our hero not only possessed the propensities of an inquisitive disposition, but also cherished a wish for positive information; because he first of all inquired how many serfs each of these land-owners possessed, and in what suburbs their estates were situated, and then only bethought himself of asking the Christian names of those in whom he appeared to take such a lively interest.

This mode of taking an interest in persons is rather unusual in Russia, for we always begin our inquiries by asking for the Christian names of father and son first, and then only let our real intentions peep out. However, notwithstanding the omission of this general rule, Tchichikoff succeeded in a very brief time indeed, in completely captivating the good graces of the two gentlemen-farmers. Maniloff, who was yet in the prime of life, with eyes as sweet as sugar, and which he was continually winking when he laughed, was ac-

tually charmed with our friend's person and manners. He pressed his hand warmly and long, and begged of him most urgently to do him the honour of visiting him on his estate, which according to him was not more than fifteen wersts from the gates of the town. To this very polite invitation, Tchichikoff replied by a very civil inclination of the head, and a truly affectionate pressure of the hand, adding that he would not only be happy to do so, but that he considered it even to be his sacred duty to do himself that honour.

Sobakevitch also invited our guest, but he did so in a rather laconic manner, simply saying: "And don't forget me;" whilst he attempted a bow, accompanied by a scratch with his left foot; this manœuvre drew the attention of Tchichikoff to his feet, which were shod in such a pair of gigantic boots, that we really believe it would be impossible to meet with a couple of feet proportioned to their size, especially now-a-days, when even Russians begin to look more at shape and fashion.

On the following day, Tchichikoff went to dine and spend the evening with the Commissary of Police, where at three o'clock in the

afternoon they sat down to a game of whist, and never rose till two hours after midnight. Here, however, he had the advantage of making the acquaintance of Mr. Nosedrieff, also an owner of some estates, a man of about thirty years of age, and of a very lively and volatile disposition, who, after three or four words, treated our stranger *en frère*. With the Commissary of Police, Nosedrieff appeared to be also very familiar and on fraternal terms; when they took their seats for the purpose of playing their long game, however, the Commissary of Police and the Procurator had the habit of very carefully examining his tricks, and followed very attentively every card he played.

Upon the following day, Tchichikoff went to pay a visit, and remained to tea at the chief magistrate's, who received his guests in a dressing gown, which looked somewhat greasy and worn out. Among the company there were also two ladies, whose names our guest did not catch. He also called in the evening upon the Vice-Governor; he dined at the great dinner of the public contractor, and at the modest table of the Procurator, whose dinner must have cost a great deal; and he supped at the Mayor's,

whose supper was worth the two dinners. In a word, Tchichikoff had no two hours time to stay at home, so much was he engaged in town, and if he returned to his hotel, it was only for the purpose of taking necessary rest.

In all respects, our traveller appeared to be welcome everywhere, for he knew how to make himself comfortable in all positions ; in short, he proved a man of considerable experience and tact, as well as a complete man of the world. It did not matter to him what question or argument was brought forward ; he never seemed embarrassed or at a loss how to sustain the subject ; if horses and races were on the *tapis*, he knew how to give his opinion on races in general, and horse-breeding in particular ; if dogs were praised, he was not at a loss to say something about the perfections of the canine race ; if the proceedings of the Imperial Courts of Inquiry were discussed, he proved that these cases, as well as the general conduct of the Imperial *employés*, were familiar to him ; if the game of billiards was brought forward, even upon the billiard-table he did not give a miss ; if benefactors were praised, he also knew how to acknowledge their merits, even with apparent tears in



his eyes; if comments upon distilleries and spirits were expressed, he also knew how to find fault with the spirits of wine, &c.; if the indiscretions of custom-house officers and inspectors were complained of, even then he knew how to judge and condemn, just as if he had himself been a custom-house officer or inspector.

But it was remarkable that he knew how to express and clothe his comments and opinions in such a pleasing and unpretending manner that he never compromised his position. His voice was neither too loud, nor did he whisper, he spoke exactly as a man ought to speak; in a word, you might have turned him any way, and still you would have found him a gentleman, and of course all the Imperial *employés* of the higher ranks in the town of Smolensk were pleased and satisfied with the appearance and manners of the new and *distingué* personage who had arrived among them.

The Lord-Lieutenant's opinion of Tchichikoff was, that he believed him a man of strictly honourable intentions; the Procurator pronounced him a very practical man; the colonel

of the garrison said that he was a learned gentleman ; the Presiding Magistrate was convinced that he was a man of deep knowledge and great modesty ; the Commissary of Police affirmed that Tchichikoff was very civil and amiable ; but his wife proclaimed him to be the most amiable and well-bred man she had seen for some time. And even Sobakevitch, who seldom had a good opinion of any one, nevertheless, after his return home from town late at night, and whilst undressing and preparing to retire, said to his wife, a slender lady of not very prepossessing appearance : " My darling heart, I have spent the evening at his Excellency's the Lord-Lieutenant, I have dined with the Commissary of Police, and have made the acquaintance of Pavel Ivanovitch Tchichikoff, a Councillor of State ; an exceedingly amiable gentleman !" whereupon the conjugal couple fell asleep.

Thus our hero had gained golden opinions from all manner of men in the good town of Smolensk, without in any way making known anything which might inform them as to the immediate object of his visit to that town. He was equally reserved as to his antecedents, but

we fortunately are well acquainted with them, and for a better comprehension of the following story, we think it will be advisable to let our readers into the secret of Mr. Tchichikoff's birth, parentage, and education.

## CHAPTER IV.

It is a very dubious circumstance whether the hero we have selected for our story will meet with much favour at the hands of our readers. Ladies he is sure not to please—and this assertion we advance confidentially—because ladies expect a hero to be a perfect creation, and if he present but the slightest mental or corporeal imperfection, then, woe to the author! However carefully he may describe his character, and were he even to draw his portrait brighter than a crystal mirror, his exertions, his talents, will be valueless, his time and labour thrown away.

The very corpulence and middle-age of Tchi-

chikoff are calculated to injure him from the very outset: corpulence is unpardonable in a hero, and many fair ladies will turn away in disgust, and say, "Fie! how ugly, how very uninteresting!" Alas! all this is but too well known to the author, for the more he has looked about him, the more he has found it the case that perfect heroes are the only ones that meet with success in this world.

On glancing at all the productions of foreign genius, he has never met with any but fair and perfect heroes and heroines, and even in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" he was astonished at finding none but youthful, fair, and virtuous sufferers.

These, then, are the characters that have met, and still seem to meet with unbounded success in the reading world, though they have been, in our humble opinion, hunted down as it were with a Russian knout, ever since romance became fashionable. Our task, as a Russian author, is a very difficult one indeed, and especially so at the present moment; and unless we can lay before our reader something unmistakeably original, we ought not to have ventured on it. However, trusting in indulgence, and boldly asserting that the perfect and virtuous heroes

are completely used up, we beg to introduce an *imposing* hero.

Dark and humble is the origin of our friend Tchichikoff. His parents he knew belonged to a lower degree of nobility, but whether of hereditary or acquired rank, he was profoundly ignorant; there was no family resemblance between them; at least, such was the opinion of a near relative of his mother's, a woman who was present at his birth. She exclaimed, as she took the new born babe in her arms, "He has not at all turned out what I expected he would be! He ought at least to have resembled his mother," which would have been even better, but he was born simply as the proverb says, "not like his father nor like his mother, but like a passing stranger."

His early life presented but acid-tasteing incidents and recollections, as if regarded through a pane of glass frozen over and covered with snow; he had no friend, no play companion in his early youth. He greeted the world in a country-house with low windows, which were never opened either in winter or summer; his father was a sickly-looking man, who wore a long kaftan or surtout, felt shoes on his bare feet,

kept continually heaving deep sighs, walked up and down his room with evident preoccupation, and used to spit frequently into a spittoon standing in a corner ; he also sat often uninterruptedly upon a wooden chair before a table with a pen in his hand and some ink on his fingers, and even upon his lips, his eyes fatigued by eternal copyings.

“Never tell a falsehood, fear God and pray for the Emperor, respect your superiors and cherish your benefactors,” were the sentences and exhortations to which our hero had to listen while still a child and incapable of judging their importance ; the continual and uniform noise of his father’s feet clad in their felt shoes, and dragging across the floor, accompanied by the well-known but harsh voice of his parent, saying, “ You are noisy again, you little rogue ! ” This is the *triste* picture of his early childhood, of which he had now scarcely preserved a faint recollection.

But in life all changes unexpectedly ; on a fine and sunshiny morning in the spring, when snow had disappeared from the fields and the roads, the father took his son and seated himself with him in a modest telega, drawn by a

small horse of the race called 'the hawk' by Russian horse dealers; this open equipage was guided by a little hunchbacked coachman, the only representative of his family and the only serf Tchichikoff's father possessed, as he was also the only servant to do all the work in his master's house. This hawk-race horse dragged them along the high road for more than two days and a half; they slept on the road, crossed the brooks and rivers, fed on cold fish pies and roast mutton, and arrived only late on the third day in the small town of Bobruisk, their destination.

Before the eyes of the little boy, glittered in unexpected magnificence the houses, shops, and streets of the little town, and so much was he at first bewildered by what he saw that he involuntarily opened his mouth widely, and kept it so for some time. His ecstasy was, however, interrupted by the quadruped hawk, falling with the telega into a deep hole, which was the entrance into a narrow lane, which led, as they advanced, down a steep declivity and was buried in mud on either side; for a long time the poor hawk-horse kept exerting itself and kicking about on all fours, assisted by both



the hunchbacked coachman and the master himself, until at last the strength of all three combined brought the vehicle out of the hole, and before a small modest-looking house, with two scrubby poplars before and a small insignificant garden behind.

This house was inhabited by a relation of Tchichikoff's mother, an old trembling woman much advanced in years, and who, notwithstanding her age, went every morning to market, and on her return from there, used to dry her wet stockings by holding them up and close to the samovar! When she beheld the little boy, she took him on her knees, clapped his rosy cheeks with both her hands, and seemed exceedingly pleased with his childish corpulence. With this original and affectionate woman he was to remain for the future, and go daily to the parish-school of the town of Bobruisk.

After passing the night with them, his father left them the next morning and started at once on his road home again. At their separation no tears flowed from the parental eyes, but he presented his son with half a rouble, a few caresses and what is more valuable still, with the following exhortations :

"Now then my boy, Pavluschka, study and learn, do not be foolish nor become a good-for-nothing boy, but try as much as possible to please and always obey your masters. If you obey your superiors; then, whether you have been successful or not in your studies, if Providence refuses you natural talents, you will still be able to get on in the world and go-ahead, even before all others. Have little or nothing to do with gay companions, they will teach you nothing good; but if you cannot avoid making acquaintances, then be upon friendly terms only with those richer than yourself, for they might be later of use to you by their influence. Do not drink or play foolish tricks by standing treat, but conduct yourself in such a manner that others may treat and compliment you. Above all, be careful and economic and spare and gather up all your pence, for money is the most influential thing in this world. Your friends and gay companions will be the first to betray and desert you in case of need, but the money you have saved will never betray you in whatever circumstances you may find yourself placed. You can do much and

succeed in everything in this world provided you have money."

After concluding his instructions and advice, the father parted with his son, took his seat on his telega, and the quadruped-hawk trotted along the high road towards home, and from that time the lowly little boy never saw his fond parent again ; but his parting words and advice remained deeply impressed in his innocent soul.

Young Pavluschka went to school, immediately, on the following day. Any particular talent, for any particular science, was not observable in the boy ; he distinguished himself more by assiduous application and orderly behaviour : but his want of talent, was counterbalanced by a mind full of practical wisdom. He at once understood and appreciated his peculiar position, and behaved in regard to his companions in such a manner, that they not only treated him always, but even gave him an excellent opportunity to reserve the greatest portion of the sweet-meats and knick-nacks, to sell at a later date, on very advantageous terms, to the very donors. Whilst still a child, he possessed suffi-

cient strength of mind to refuse himself, and abstain from everything. Of the half-rouble given to him on the departure of his father, he had not spent a single copek, on the contrary, at the end of the year the sum at his disposal had increased considerably, showing nearly an incredible result of his carefulness and speculative mind. He commenced his speculation by making an hussar on horseback, out of wax, and sold him uncommonly advantageously. After this, his first success, he ventured sometime later into a variety of other speculations; such as buying honey-cakes in the market-place, which he took with him to school and seated himself near those of his school-fellows, who were the richest, and as soon as he saw them moving about on their forms, with evident uneasiness, he took it for granted that his friend felt the pang of hunger, and immediately passed him under the bench a honey-cake or a copek-loaf, for which the other was but too glad to pay him at once, in order to satisfy the cravings of his boyish appetite.

He passed nearly two months at home devoting all his time and attention to the education of a

mouse, for which he had made with his own little hands a wooden cage, and at last he had succeeded so far as to make the little animal sit up on its hind legs, lie down and get up again when commanded, and ultimately sold it very advantageously indeed. When he had economised about five roubles, he got himself a small bag, which he had sown himself, put the round sum of five into it, tied the bag up, and began to collect his rising capital in another.

As regards his conduct towards his teacher, he behaved himself, if possible, with even more wisdom. It must be observed that the master of that school was extraordinarily fond of quietude and good conduct, and could not bear the sight of intelligent and lively boys; he imagined that they would infallibly laugh at him. It was sufficient for any of the more intelligent boys to show their talent or make the master guess that they possessed some, even if it was betrayed by a slight movement with the eye-brows, it would have been sufficient to attract upon them his anger and resentment. He would persecute and punish the intelligent boy with unrelenting severity.

“Twill cure you of your pretentions and

want of respect, you saucy boy, and bring you back to your right senses ; I'll make you kneel down—you shall have a day's fasting !" And the poor boy, not able to account for his punishment, had to kneel down and fast nearly every day.

" Disposition and talent ! all that is stuff and nonsense !" he used to say : " I only look at your conduct. I will give any boy good marks for all sciences, no matter whether he know even the alpha of it, provided his conduct is good and praiseworthy ; but wherever I observe a spirit of insubordination and inclination to ridicule, I'll give that boy a nought, whether he be talented enough to put a Solomon in his pocket !"

Thus spoke the master in the public school of Bobruisk, to his pupils, no doubt because he had himself been brought up in an establishment where the silent system was carried to such a perfection that a fly would have been heard flying across the school-room ; where not one of the scholars in the course of the whole year had had ever any occasion to cough or blow his nose, and when not even the slightest noise ever betrayed that there were any scholars assembled.

Tchichikoff was also successful herein, and at once understood the animus of his school-

master, and in what his general conduct towards him ought to consist. He never winked once, nor did he raise his eye-brows during the whole time the school hours lasted, however mischievously his school-fellows pinched and annoyed him; scarcely had he heard the bell ring as a sign for their dismissal, when he rushed forward before anyone else could have a chance, to hand his master his three-cornered head-dress; when he had shown him this attention, he generally hastened to leave the school immediately, and always managed so well, as to meet his master at least three times on his road home, in order to have an opportunity to salute him, and take his cap off in the most respectful manner.

His manœuvres with his school-master were crowned with complete success. During the whole time of his being at the school, he always received the best marks, and on leaving it he was dismissed with the most flattering testimonials, and presented with a book with gold edges, and the following inscription in gold letters: "For praiseworthy application, and meritorious conduct."

## CHAPTER V.

WHEN Tchichikoff left the school, he made his appearance in the world as a young man of very prepossessing appearance, and with a chin that already had begun to require the services of a razor. At the very same period he lost in quick succession his fond parents. The inheritance left to him consisted of four worn-out flannels, two old and irretrievable coats lined with squirrel skins, and a trifling sum of money. His father had been, as it seemed, an excellent adviser as regarded economy, and the principles connected with it, but had done little himself to cultivate that virtue, for the little he left his son was very unimportant indeed.



Tchichikoff sold at once the modest house and the small stretch of land attached to it for a thousand roubles, and took his hunchbacked servant and his then two little boy serfs Selifan and Petruschka with him to the town of Pskov, where he intended to establish himself, and enter the service.

During the time of his preparations for departure from Bobruisk, his old school-master, who had been so very fond of silence and good conduct, had been dismissed in his turn from the public school, either for his stupidity or some similar reason. The poor master, overwhelmed with grief at his disgrace, addicted himself to drinking, and at last could not even satisfy that inclination from the want of the necessary funds; ill in health, without a crust of bread or any assistance, he hid himself and his sorrows in a miserable cold hovel.

Some of his former scholars, especially those who had displeased him so particularly, on account of their malicious intelligence, when they heard of his pitiable condition, immediately raised a subscription in his favour among them, depriving themselves even of many little necessities to assist the poor ruined man. Pavel

Ivanovitch Tchichikoff was the only one who lacked generosity; he contributed the smallest silver coin of the realm, adding that he could afford no more; his colleagues refused to accept the donation, and called him a miserable specimen of selfishness personified.

The poor school-master, when he heard of this trait of one whom he considered his best scholar, covered his face with both hands, and burst into a flood of tears, which trickled down his pale and meagre cheeks like shot, until his eyes became dim like those of a crying child. "On my death-bed Heaven has condemned me to shed tears over a serpent," exclaimed he at last, in a feeble voice, and then added again: "Oh, Pavel Pavluschka! it is thus, then, that men can change! and when I think of it again, what an excellent boy he used to be, always of an exemplary conduct, no vestige of malice in him! He has deceived me, cruelly deceived me!" And hereupon the instructor of Tchichikoff's early youth breathed his last.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the nature of our hero was of a harsh and unfeeling description, or to such a degree insensible that

he did not feel pity and sympathy for the sufferings of others; he felt the one as well as the other, he would have been even glad to alleviate the wants of his friends, provided they would not prove expensive, nor oblige him to break into that sum of money, which he had laid aside with the intention of not touching it under any circumstances, for he bore in mind his father's advice: "Take care and economise your copeks, or you will come to a bad end." However, he had no particular attachment to money, for the sake of money, he was not ruled by a stingy feeling of saving, nor was he a niggard. No, he was not animated with an insatiable desire for wealth, for the sake of keeping it hidden; life opened itself before him with all its attractions for a youthful mind; he wished to possess a beautifully furnished house, carriages and horses, and numerous serfs and servants, such were the thoughts that begun early to pre-occupy his mind.

And it was in order to obtain all these wishes and comforts in the course of time and his life, that he economised every copek he possibly could, and that he strictly refused himself in his earlier years all pleasures, or to

others any assistance. Whenever he happened to see a wealthy *parvenu* drive along the streets, showing off a splendid droschki, and richly caparisoned horses, he would stop short and admire him with an air of envy, and forget himself in the sight before him, then suddenly recovering as if from a dream, add: "Some years ago you were perhaps a serf, you have purchased your freedom, and are rich"; but for all that I see your origin by the peculiar cut of your hair!"

And the sight of all those that appeared to him to enjoy fortune and comforts, produced upon him a sorrowful impression to a certain degree inexplicable to himself. When he had left his school, and disposed of his trifling estate, he would not allow himself even the least relaxation, but was full of anxiety to begin his task in life at once, and enter the service in a civil capacity without delay. However, notwithstanding his excellent testimonials, he obtained with great difficulty a modest situation in a government office.

And heaven knows that in a country like Russia, the greatest talent is worth little without influential protection to back it! The place

he held in the government office was an insignificant one which brought him an annual revenue of no more than forty or fifty roubles. But he was determined to work hard, to overcome all difficulties, and to succeed. And, really, perseverance, patience, and self-denial were qualities which he revealed in an incredible perfection. From the early morning until late at night, never feeling the fatigues of body and mind, he continued to apply himself to his writings and copies; he never went home, but slept upon the benches and tables of the government office, he used to dine often even with the porter and servants; but with all that he knew how to preserve cleanliness and a respectable appearance in his dress, to give a pleasant expression to his face, and even assume some semblance of nobility in his movements and manners.

It must be observed that the official servants of the crown distinguish themselves generally by neglected, and in every respect disadvantageous appearance and manners. And this was especially the case with the colleagues of Tchichikoff; the faces of some of them looked really like badly-baked bread; the one had a

cheek all on one side, another a chin out of proportion, a third was gifted with an upper lip as large as a bladder, which even used to burst now and then, in a word, they were far from being handsome. They used to speak in a harsh and unpleasant tone of voice, as if they had conspired to cut some ones' throat; they were addicted to pay frequent tributes to Bacchus, proving by such an inclination that the Slavonic race was still addicted to the worship of the heathen gods; they did not even mind making their appearance in the office tolerably inebriated, which spread an unpleasant perfume all around the place, and which was far from being aromatic.

In the midst of such an assembly of *employés* of the Imperial Government, it was impossible that such a man as Tchichikoff should remain unnoticed and undistinguished; presenting, as he did, in every respect such a striking contrast as regarded his personal appearance, general bearing, and above all other good qualities, total abstemiousness from any intoxicating drink, as if he had secretly joined some teetotal brotherhood in England.

Notwithstanding all these advantages in his favour, his path to glory was a very difficult one indeed: he happened to be the under-clerk of a chancery-judge, an elderly man, who was the very image of insensibility and sternness; always the same, unapproachable, whose face had never been wrinkled by a smile, whose lips had never whispered even an inquiry after another fellow-creature's health. Nobody could have said, that he ever knew this man, or saw him different from what he appeared daily, whether in the open street, or in his own lonely house; if he had shown but once a slight interest in anything, if he could have but once forgotten himself and his sternness by getting intoxicated, and then have betrayed a smile; if he could but for once have given himself up to a mad gaiety like the highway-man, who, after the capture of a rich booty gives way to intemperance and debauchery—but no, there was not a vestige of anything of this sort in this granite man. There seemed absolutely nothing in the man; he was not a villain, and yet he possessed no virtues, and something awful seemed to replace the visible absence of all else.

The hard, marble-like features of his face, without any striking irregularities, presented no harmony; his harsh features were in an unpleasant contradiction with themselves. The traces and little holes left by small-pox which covered his whole face, were the only striking peculiarities which classed it among the number of those faces, upon which, according to a popular saying, the devil had been threshing peas over-night. Now, although it appeared, at first sight, as if human ingenuity would fail to ingratiate itself with such a being, nevertheless Tchichikoff made the attempt.

In the commencement of this superhuman design, he began by trying to anticipate his slightest wishes in the merest trifles; examined most carefully every one of the quills, with which he was in the habit of writing, and after having made them as it were to pattern, he took good care to place them always ready to his hand; blew and swept from his table the snuff as well as the dust; supplied him with a new rag for the use of his inkstand; found out the place where he used to keep his official cap, a most filthy affair, such as has, perhaps, been rarely seen before, and took good care to place



it constantly close to him at the last moment of his sitting in the office ; brushed his back, if the old man had happened to rub off the whitewash from the wall ; but all the attentions remained without being in the slightest degree noticed, just as if they had never happened to be shown to him.

At last, however, Tchichikoff succeeded in putting his nose as it were into the household and domestic life of the old original, and discovered that he had an adult daughter, with a face resembling that of her father, that is to say, a face with traces upon it, as if the devil had been threshing peas on it over-night. Upon this quarter he now determined on directing his attacks. When he had ascertained to which church she was in the habit of going on Sunday, he watched her enter, and took up his position exactly opposite to her, carefully dressed, and with a stiff collar, and neatly-plaited shirt-front.

By this stratagem he ultimately succeeded ; the stern chancery-judge began to waver, and gave him an invitation to tea ; and, before the other officials had yet found time to look around them, Tchichikoff had brought matters to such

a satisfactory conclusion for himself, that he soon saw himself established in the house, and living with the old chancery-judge. He had rendered himself a useful and indispensable servant to the old man, and went to market for him to purchase meal and sugar for him ; towards his daughter he behaved as if she were his bride ; as for the old judge, he had accustomed himself to call him dear papa, and ever kissed his hand.

All the officials of the judge now expected that at the end of the month of February, before the long and general fast began, their friend and colleague, Tchichikoff, would become the happy and chosen husband of their superior's daughter. The stern and harsh old judge now begun even to bestir himself in his favour and to push him forward, and really, in a short time after, Tchichikoff was himself promoted to the vacant seat of a chancery-judge. With this success also, seemed to terminate the principal aim of his intimacy with the stern old judge ; because, scarcely had he been appointed to his new office, when he secretly removed all his property from the house of his patron, and on the following day he was already quite at home

in his new apartments. He ceased henceforth to call the old chancery-judge, papa, nor did he ever after think of kissing his bony hand, and as for the anticipated marriage with the judge's daughter, it was left to oblivion, and as if such a subject had never been on the *tapis*. However, whenever he happened to meet the old man in the street, he would always advance civilly towards him, take him by the hand and invite him to a cup of tea at his house, so that the old judge, notwithstanding his eternal sternness and inexplicable indifference to anything generally, could not help shaking his grey head thoughtfully, and murmuring in his beard : " He has deceived me, awfully deceived me, this child of Satan !"

## CHAPTER VI.

THIS was the most difficult passage during the whole course of Tchichikoff's eventful career. Thenceforward his progress towards position and fortune became easier, and in course of time he even became a man of some importance and weight. He now began to display all those qualities that ensure success in the world; agreeable in his manners, delicate in his actions, and enterprising in business. Blessed in the possession of such indispensable and valuable qualifications, he succeeded in a very short time in securing himself a certain income and independent position, from which he knew how to derive excellent advantages.

It must be observed that at that particular time, and in consequence of the bitter complaints that had reached the imperial ears about the merciless exactions of the official *employés* in the provinces of the Empire, the Lord-Lieutenants of the various governments had received strict injunctions to punish with the utmost severity the impudent impositions of the imperial servants, and courts of inquiry were everywhere held for the purpose of putting a stop to the sufferings of the people from these imperial blood-suckers. These courts of inquiry did not in anyway alarm Tchichikoff, on the contrary, he even knew how to derive advantages from this imperial ordinance, and he furnished a striking proof of the ingenuity of the Russian spirit, which is always prepared to find ways and means when necessity demands them.

In order to avoid any unpleasant consequences, he had adopted the following system: as soon as a petitioner presented himself before him and proceeded to explain his case, and put his hand into his pocket with the evident intention of producing from there the requisite letter patent of recommendation, in order to obtain his Excellency's the Prince Hovanskois' (as we call

it familiarly) signature to his document, "No, no," he used to say, with a smile on his countenance, whilst stopping the egress of the generous hand, "you think, perhaps, that I—oh no, by no means. It is our bounden duty, we are obliged to attend to your interest without the slightest pretention to a private remuneration for our trouble. As regards your application, you may rest tranquil and assured it shall be attended to by to-morrow at latest. Allow me to request the favour of your address; you need not even take the least trouble further about the matter, all your documents shall be forwarded to your house."

The enchanted petitioner returned home quite in ecstasy, thinking to himself: "At last I have met an honest man among our imperial *employés*, and I should be very glad to see more men of a similar stamp among us. He is a real gem!" The delighted petitioner waits patiently for a day, and then a second, and then a third day passes without his business or application having been sent to his house as promised. He returns again to the government office, and finds that his business has not been

even begun ; he addresses himself to the invaluable gem.

“ Oh, I beg of you a thousand pardons, my dear Sir !” says Tchichikoff, very politely, and affably laying hold of both the hands of the disappointed petitioner, “ but really, we had so very much business on hand ; however, by to-morrow you shall be attended to, absolutely, by to-morrow, and most punctually, I can assure you, my dear Sir, I feel quite ashamed at the delay !”

And all this was said in the most winning manner, and accompanied by the most civil courtesies. If, on such an occasion, his morning gown (imperial *employés* generally transact public business at home, and in a very *dégagé* costume,) should accidentally unfold itself ; his hands were always prepared to cover up the folds and amend the *négligé* appearance. But, notwithstanding these civil assurances, the petitioner’s business was neither attended on the next day nor on the day following, nor even on the next day following the day following.

The disappointed petitioner began to repent ; can there be anything the matter ? He at

last comes to the conclusion, that it has always been the custom to give a gratuity to the copying-clerks.

“And why should I not give a trifle to these poor fellows?” says he to a friend. “I know but too well how miserably the government pays their services; I am ready and willing to give them a couple of roubles, to be sure.”

“A couple of roubles will never do; you will have to fork out a bank-note.”

“What! a bank-note to copying-clerks?” demands again the astonished petitioner.

“Why do you seem surprised, or out of temper?” his friends ask him; “what you anticipate will happen according to your intentions; the copying-clerks will receive a couple of roubles, and the remainder of your bank-note will find its way into the pocket of their superior.”

The perplexed and slow-minded petitioner strikes his forehead with his hand, and is surprised at the changes in this world, and the new polite customs that had suddenly sprung up among the imperial *employés*. Formerly, a petitioner knew exactly what to do, and how to behave himself: he had simply to present a ten-



rouble note to the head *employé*, and his business was attended to; but now-a-day a twenty-five-rouble note seems scarcely sufficient, and you have even to wait for a week before you can guess it. The devil take the shameless civilities and nobility of the imperial *employés* !

Some time after his instalment in his new dignity, an excellent opportunity to advance his fortunes presented itself to Tchichikoff; a committee was being formed for the construction of a very extensive and capital government storehouse. Tchichikoff found ways and means to be elected a member of it, and soon proved himself to be one of the most active promoters. This committee began its operations immediately. During six years, the committee busied itself about the building: but, whether it was the harshness of the climate, or the fault of proper material, the Crown building never rose above its foundations.

Meanwhile, and at the other end of the town, there sprung up, as it were from the ground, houses built on the principles of modern architecture, and the individual property of each member of the building-committee. These members now began to enjoy the well-being of

home comforts, and got married in quick succession. It was then, and then only, that Tchichikoff began by degrees to emancipate himself from the harsh laws of abstinence and pitiless privations which he had imposed upon himself. It was only now that he ventured to relax from his long fasting, and it seemed that he had not always been a stranger to the enjoyments of comfort and general well-being, from which he had had sufficient strength of mind to abstain during the years of his adolescence, when no man can pretend to have been complete master of his passions.

He now even went as far as to display a few extravagant propensities, such as keeping a cook of some reputation, and made the purchase of very fine Irish linen shirts. As for the cloth which he wore, it was no longer of such inferior quality as was worn by the other officials of the province; he began to bring into fashion different shades of coffee and snuff-colours, and similar brownish tints; he made the acquisition of a fine pair of carriage-horses, and used to drive about in a droschki and pair, holding the reins of one of the horses himself, and making the horse bend his neck into the shape of a

ring ; he also began to indulge in a fine Turkish sponge to wash his face with, mixing his water profusely with Eau-de-Cologne ; he even went so far as to buy a peculiar kind of soap, which was very expensive, but possessed the virtue to render the skin of his face smooth and velvety ; he already—

But suddenly—in the place of the former sleepy president of the building-committee, a new chairman was appointed by the imperial ordinance : a military man, severe and strict in his principles—a man who was an enemy to all impositions upon the public as well as upon the Crown ; in short, a detester of falsehood in any shape. Immediately after the day of his arrival, he caused a general consternation among the members of the building-committee by demanding a report and an account of their proceedings, and found defalcations at every step of his investigations ; he also discovered and inspected the houses of modern architecture. In consequence of all these discoveries, he assembled a general meeting, and pushed his inquiries with the utmost diligence and severity. All the *employés* connected with the building-committee were at once dismissed the service ;

their houses of modern architecture were confiscated for the benefit of the Crown, and changed into benevolent institutions and public schools; all was blown down, as it were, like castles in the air, and among the severest sufferers was our friend Tchichikoff.

His general countenance and his affable manners, strange to say, displeased the new president at first sight; the exact reason, Heaven only knew, sometimes such results will happen quite unaccountably, but the fact remained the same—the new president could not endure the sight of the old committee member. However, as he happened to be a military man, it was not likely that he could know much, if anything, of the ways and means of officers in the civil service; and in a very short time indeed, and thanks to a respectable exterior, and the knowledge of applying themselves to any and everything, other *employés* found an opportunity of ingratiating themselves in the good graces of the new president, and the new honest and upright commander found himself soon in the hands of another and, if possible, a more dishonest set of officials than the former, and of which fact he had no opportunity of convincing

himself; he was even much satisfied at having at last met with honest men, such as the Crown ought always to employ, and boasted of his own judgment in the choice he had made.

His new *employés* guessed and understood their chief's character at once. Every one of the men who were under his command, became desperate hunters after anything that bore the slightest semblance to falsehood; everywhere, and under all circumstances, they prosecuted untruth like a fisherman of the Volga would hunt after a fine sturgeon; and they hunted after it with so much perseverance and success, that in a very short time indeed every one found himself at the head of a capital of a few thousand roubles.

At that very same period, a number of the former *employés* of this same committee turned again upon the way of truth, and were graciously received again in the service with their colleagues. But Tchichikoff, notwithstanding his strenuous exertions to ingratiate himself again, and in spite of the protection of his intimate friend, the private secretary of Prince Hovanskoi, who had become the right-hand man of the new president of the building-com-

mittee, he could not succeed in obtaining for him the most insignificant appointment under the new manager of the imperial interest. The president was a man of a peculiar character, though he was led by the nose (of this fact he was of course unaware); he would persevere in his once fixed opinion, provided it had presented itself to his mind and attention, and whenever it had taken root in his head, it would remain fixed there like a nail; nothing would ever be strong enough to extricate it from there, for he was full of tenacity.

All that his friend, the private secretary of the Prince, could possibly obtain for Tchichikoff, was the destruction of the sullied certificate of his services as an *employé* in the building-committee; and even this favour he could only extract from his superior by a representation in the most touching terms of the pitiable position of Tchichikoff's family, which, by the bye, he had the good fortune of counting among the things that were not in existence.

## CHAPTER VII.

“WELL!” said Tchichikoff to himself, “it seems the bow could not stand the stretching. Tears will not amend the fault; I must betake myself to another task.” And determined on beginning his career anew, he put on once more the armour of patience, and again subjected himself to every species of privations, however unpleasant they seemed now, after having accustomed himself to enjoy even luxuries. He was obliged to remove to another town, and make himself again notable, if not notorious.

Somehow or another, matters did not go on satisfactorily at all. He was obliged to resign

two or three appointments in a very short space of time: the duties were in his opinion rather onerous and mean. It must be observed that Tchichikoff was a man of such unexceptionable propriety, it would have been difficult to meet with another like him anywhere in the broad Russian Empire. Although he had been obliged to wind his way through the midst of a sullied society, yet he had always succeeded in keeping his heart and his person clean; he was fond of holding an appointment in an office where the tables were well polished, and where gentlemanly habits were strictly regarded. He was never guilty of coarse expressions in his conversation, but was always offended when others omitted to show due respect to rank and position.

It will perhaps be interesting to our reader to know, that he had the habit of changing his linen every other day, and in summer, during the excessive heat, even every day; the least odour gave offence to his olfactory nerves. For this very reason, whenever his servant Petruschka came to undress him and take off his boots, he used to hold a smelling-bottle to his



nose, whilst in many other instances his nerves were as sensitive as those of a young girl; and for this reason it was all the more difficult to him to accustom himself again to the habits of those who were addicted to the use of strong spirits, and generally displayed unbecoming manners. However much he tried to exert himself to keep up a good spirit within him, he nevertheless could not help pining away, and becoming even of a lemon-coloured complexion from the reverses of fortune.

He had already begun to grow corpulent and assume those pleasant and round forms, in which the reader found our hero at the commencement of the acquaintance with him, and more than once he had smiled at himself whilst looking at his face in the mirror and whilst whispering many a pleasant and insinuating smile; but now, when he happened to look at himself furtively into the-looking glass, he could not help exclaiming: "Holiest mother! how ugly I look to be sure!" And after this he would not venture to examine himself for a long while. However he endured and conquered the vicissitudes manfully and patiently, and—at last entered the

government service again, as a custom-house officer, in the frontier town of Bialystock.

We must here observe, that the custom-house service had been already for a considerable time the secret object of his wishes and speculation, because that particular branch of administration constitutes the chief revenue of the Empire, and consequently allowed the best pay to the officers employed in the service. But this was not the only reason for his giving the preference to a custom-house appointment. He saw with what exquisite articles of refinement all the custom-house officers used to parade in town, what fine china and linens they all sent to their sweet-hearts, sisters and cousins. And many a time he had already exclaimed, whilst heaving a deep sigh : " Oh, how I should like to get an appointment in the custom-house ! the frontier is not far off, the people seem all more enlightened, and especially, what an excellent chance to provide one-self with fine linen ! "

We must add, that at the same time, he also thought of the expensive French soaps, which had the virtue to increase and preserve the complexion ! what its particular denomina-

tions was, heavens only kn w, but accordingly to his suppositions, it would certainly absolutely be found at the frontier. And he therefore had long felt a desire to get himself an appointment in the custom-house ; but he was prevented from sending in an application, on account of the advantageous profits which he derived from the building-committee, and in this his judgment was correct. Whatever the advantages of a custom-house appointment might offer *in spe*, they were nevertheless like a lark in the skies, whilst the building-committee was like an owl in his hands. Now was his time to exert himself to the utmost, and obtain the long wished for appointment in the custom-house, and really he at last obtained his wish.

He started upon his new duties with an unusual eagerness. Such abilities, penetration and application as he displayed in his new functions had not only never been witnessed before, but even never heard of. In less than three or four weeks after his appointment to office, he had so perfectly rendered himself master of everything, that his equal could not be found ; he knew and understood all—he had no necessity either to

weigh or measure anything, but knew from the invoices how many arschines a piece of cloth or silk contained ; or on taking a piece of goods in his hands, he could say exactly how many pounds it weighed.

As regarded the regular business of an excise-man, namely, "searching," he displayed as his colleagues used to express themselves, the scent of a pointer ; it was perfectly impossible not to be surprised, on seeing how he could display so much patience and trouble to touch and examine even every button, but all this was done with a killing coolness and an incredible politeness. And at the time, when the persons thus exposed to his "researches," were annoyed to madness, and lost their temper, and felt a wicked inclination to smash his pleasant countenance, he would, without changing either the expression of his face, or his polite manners, only add : "Would you, perhaps, have any objection to incommode yourself a little by rising from your seat ?" or, "Would your ladyship have the kindness to step into the other room ?" (even the ladies are not spared the annoyances of custom-house officers in Russia.) "There your

ladyship will find the wife of one of our officials, who will have the honour to explain to you the regulations of the custom-house," or, "Will you allow me to rip up with this small pen-knife a little of the wadding of your cloak?" and saying this, and suiting the action to the word, he would produce from there, shawls and dresses as coolly as if he was taking them out of his own portmanteau.

His superiors even pronounced their opinion about him in the following terms, "that he was the devil himself and not a man:" he made his "researches" in carriage wheels, harness, and even in the ears of the horses, and heaven knows where he did not search for contraband goods; at any rate, an author would never hit upon the idea of searching in those places, where a custom-house officer has the right to pry.

The poor traveller who happened to leave or enter the Empire on that particular frontier, was sure to feel for some minutes at least, after the custom-house officer had performed his duty, the cold perspiration run down all over his body, and exclaim perhaps whilst crossing himself;

"This is rather carrying custom-house regulations too far!" The position of a traveller who had the misfortune to fall in the hands of Tchichikoff, must have been similar to that of a school-boy rushing out of the master's room, where he had entered under the impression that he would receive a simple reprimand, and where he had unexpectedly met with a sound thrashing.

In the course of a very short season indeed, those persons, who were in the habit of carrying on a regular system of contraband trade were completely ruined by his watchfulness. He was the terror and ruin of the whole of the Polish Jew race. His faith and honesty were unimpeachable—almost unnatural. He even declined to accept a portion of such monies as were the result of sales of the various confiscated goods or trifling sundry articles, which were not accounted for to the Crown, in order to avoid loss of time and expense.

Such zealous and disinterested service could not fail to become the subject of general admiration and surprise, and found at last its recompense with the higher authorities. He was knighted and elevated to the rank of Councillor

of State, and soon after he submitted a project for capturing all contrabandists, asking only the favour to be appointed the executor of his scheme and for the necessary means. He was immediately invested with unlimited power, and the privilege of search wherever he thought proper. This was all he could wish for. At that time a large and powerful contraband society had been formed, based upon a regular system of fraud upon the Crown; more than a million worth of goods secretly imported into the Empire, yielded double the amount to this bold enterprize.

Tchichikoff had had long since an idea of this organization, and had even twice already repelled the envoys who had been sent to bribe him; but he refused to listen to any of their proposals, adding dryly, "It is not yet time." But scarcely had he obtained uncontrolled authority in everything, when he in the next moment after his confirmation, sent word to the secret associations, saying: "Now is the time."

His calculations were but too just. Now he stood a chance of gaining in one year, that which he could perhaps have never acquired otherwise in twenty. At the beginning of the

foundation of this society, he would not have anything to do with them; because he was nothing else but a simple custom-house officer, consequently, besides perhaps compromising himself, his share in the transactions would have been insignificant; but now, now it was quite a different affair altogether; he was a Councillor of State, and could therefore fix his own terms.

In order to ensure speed and complete success, he even gained over another *employé*, a colleague of his, who could not resist the luring temptation, although he was already a grey-haired man. The conditions between the two contracting parties, namely the imperial *employés* and the contrabandists, were securely fixed, and the smuggling association began its operations.

The beginning of their operations was brilliant; some of our readers might perhaps have heard some time ago of the long-forgotten history of the wise Spanish sheep, who went out travelling in double coats; well, these very same Spanish sheep with a double fleece, imported on this occasion, Brussels lace of nearly one million roubles value. This was the first operation upon the interests of the Crown in



which Tchichikoff played a prominent part. Had he presided over and led this undertaking himself, not even the cleverest and acutest Jew in the world would have ever succeeded in carrying out such a daring enterprize. After three or four journeys of the Spanish sheep across the frontier line, both chief custom-house officers had realized a capital of about four hundred thousand roubles each. It was even said, that Tchichikoff's share in the enterprize exceeded half a million roubles, because he was so much more daring.

Heaven knows to what incalculable amount these already very round and handsome sums of money would have increased in the course of time, if some evil spirit had not crossed in a fatal moment their path. The devil set the two chief officers by the ears; to speak intelligibly and simply, the two *employés* picked a quarrel about a mere nothing. Somehow or another, perhaps in a moment of excitement, and perhaps even while under the influence of a glass or two of good wine, Tchichikoff happened to call his worthy colleague a staròver (dissenter), and the other, though he really was a staròver, it is impossible to say why, felt horribly insulted, and

answered him there and then, immediately, loudly, and in an unusually cutting tone of voice, as follows: "You lie! I am a Privy Concillor of State, and not a staròver; but as for you, you are a staròver!" And then he also added, a few minutes later, and as if to spite his friend: "Yes, take that and all!"

Though he had in this manner shaved the other, as it were, by retorting on him the appellation applied to himself, and though the expression of "Yes, take that and all!" might have had a powerful meaning; not satisfied with this, he sent in to government a secret information against Tchichikoff. However, it was said, that besides this quarrel, there was another cause of difference between them; and it was rumoured about, that it was concerning a woman, young, fresh, and healthy as a sweet beet-root, according to the expressions of the other custom-house officials; it was also known that some *bravos* had been hired to give a sound thrashing to our hero, which had really happened on a certain fine evening; but that, in the end, both superior's friends had been made fools of by the fair woman, and that a certain Stabz-Capitän Schamschareff gained the

day over them, and succeeded in carrying the fair Briseïs off before their very noses.

The nearer particulars of this affair are wrapped in obscurity, and we therefore leave it to our courteous reader to imagine the details according to their own taste. The most important of all was, that the secret connection between our hero and the smugglers became known to the superior authorities. And though the Privy Councillor of State had ruined the simple Councillor of State through his infamous denunciation, he did not escape the due punishment himself, but was immediately degraded and dismissed.

Tchichikoff and his coadjutor were arrested and brought up to judgment, all their property was confiscated for the benefit of the Crown, and their misfortune and disgrace broke over them like a thunder-storm. When the storm was over, and when they began to recover again a little, they seemed quite horror-struck when they looked upon what they had been guilty of. The Privy Councillor could not resist the shock, and died soon after, but the simple Councillor of State bore up more manfully. He had succeeded in secreting a considerable amount of

his fortune, notwithstanding the strictest investigations of the Court of Inquiry that was held over them. He used the finest diplomacy the human mind is capable of to extricate himself as advantageously as possible from his disgraceful position, and his experience assisted him in this most powerfully, for he knew already well enough of what stuff the men with whom he had to deal were made; he employed the greatest circumspection, his politest manners, the most touching and persuasive terms, burnt incense and confused his judges by a profusion of flattery, which did not in the least injure his position; he even went so far as to consider money no object, provided he could succeed in extricating himself; in a word, he turned the tables so well in his favour, that he could reappear again in the world, at least not so much disgraced as his more unfortunate colleague, for he ultimately succeeded, though narrowly, in escaping from being sent to Siberia.

## CHAPTER VIII.

TCHICHIKOFF's reserve funds had, however, dwindled down to a mere trifle ; his splendidly furnished house with all its foreign refinements was taken from him and given as a reward to some other official. All that was left to him, amounted to a sum of about ten thousand roubles, besides a couple of dozen fine Holland shirts, a convenient, light britchka, to which bachelors give the preference for travelling purposes, and two faithful serfs, his coachman Selifan and his valet Petruschka, (the little hunchback had died some time before), and we must also not forget to mention that his former colleagues in office, moved by compassion at his

disgrace and sad prospects—for they believed him penniless—had had the generosity to leave him a few pieces of that peculiar French soap which possesses the virtue of preserving the freshness of the skin; and this was all that he could call his property.

And it was in such a position that our hero made his appearance! Such then was the excess of misfortunes that befel him! And this it was what he called in Smolensk to suffer in the service for truth and the just cause. Now the conclusion might have been drawn that, after so many sad experiences and changes of fortune and position in life, he would wisely retire with his round sum of ten thousand roubles into a small and quiet provincial town, and put on for ever a comfortable Tartar cotton morning-gown, and seat himself at the window of some modest private house, and look on a Sunday at the fights and quarrels of the mouzhiks before him in the street; or take a walk in the poultry-yard, and feed with his own hands the fowl which he would like to have cooked for his dinner, and would have continued to lead a quiet and retired though not entirely useless existence.

However, it did not happen thus. Justice

must be rendered to his unconquerable fortitude of character. All that had happened to him would perhaps, if not have killed another man, at least would have served him as a caution and quieted him ; but with our hero it was not so, the inward flame of his passion was as ardent as ever. He felt acute grief and vexation, swore at the whole world, angry at the injustice of Providence, disgusted at the injustice of men in general ; but for all that he could not forbear making new essays. In a word, he displayed such an extraordinary amount of patience and perseverance, against which the wooden patience and perseverance of a German are nothing, because it is constitutional with them.

Tchichikoff's blood, on the contrary, was like an ever-playing fountain, and it was requisite for him to possess a powerful will and wisdom, to bridle all those passions which would have liked to escape and enjoy unbounded freedom. He began to muse and to reflect on the past and on the future, and the conclusions he arrived at were not at all devoid of sound judgment.

“ Why should it be always I ? Why should I continually be the victim of a cruel destiny ?

Who is the man in our empire who lingers over his duties ? All, the whole nation, from the Emperor himself down to the meanest serf, all have their mind bent upon acquisition. I have ruined nobody ; I have not robbed the lonely widow, nor have I made any children orphans. I have derived profit from superfluities, have only taken what every one else in my place would have taken ; if I had not profited by the chance offered me, others would have done so. Why should others alone enjoy wealth and comforts, and why I alone be condemned to live and die like a worm ?

“ And what am I now ? For what am I good now ? With what countenance should I now be able to look into the face of any pater familias ? How can I escape the pangs of shame, knowing that I walk uselessly on the face of the earth : and what will my children say when I am dead and gone ? They will say our father was a villain : he left us no position, no fortune ! ”

It is already well known to our readers that Tchichikoff was particularly anxious about his heirs. A very tender subject. Many a man would perhaps venture head and neck, if it was



not for the question which presses itself inexplicably upon him—"What will my children say?" And the possible head of a future generation, like a precautious cat, looking sideways to espy if his master is in the way, seizes hurriedly everything that happens to be near him, either a piece of soap, some candles, tallow, or a canary bird if it should happen to fall under its claws; in a word, he allows nothing to escape.

Thus lamented our disconsolate hero: meanwhile his activity was not extinguished within him; it only slumbered for a while. There was always something that preoccupied his mind, and only waited for the chance of a sound plan. He armed himself once more with his peculiar virtues, and determined again to begin an active and difficult life; he again submitted himself to the well-known privations of former life, and again from an elevated and respectable position, he launched himself into sullied and low life. And in the expectation of something better turning up, he was obliged to accept the situation of a commission-agent, a profession yet badly received and acknowledged by our citizens, pushed about on all sides, shabbily paid and treated with disregard and even with con-

tempt. However, necessity obliges us to many things, and also excuses them, and our hero therefore determined upon accepting the situation.

Among a variety of business with which he had been entrusted, was also the following: to mortgage in the Imperial Bank of the Council of Guardians, a few hundred serfs. The nobleman who had commissioned him to undertake this business was ruined, and reduced to the last extremity. His landed property was already completely encumbered, by an epidemic among his cattle, villainous and dishonest stewards, bad harvests, epidemic diseases which had carried off numbers of his most valuable serfs, and at last by the follies of the nobleman himself, who had purchased and furnished a house in St. Petersburg at an extravagant expense but in the last Parisian fashion, and who had spent upon this mad fancy his last rouble, so that he had nothing to eat. And for this reason, he was obliged to have recourse to the last extremity, and determine upon parting with his life estate.

The Imperial Bank for the mortgage of landed property and serfs, under the title of

Council of Guardians, is one of the numerous paternal institutions of recent date, and of all of which his Majesty the Emperor is himself the head. The transactions of the Imperial Council of Guardians claim his peculiar attention, and consist chiefly in advancing monies to such noblemen of the Empire as have become embarrassed from various causes, but principally from such as we have already alluded to. The monies of the Crown are advanced upon real estate, namely upon land and serfs. It is principally left to the Council of Guardians to fix the period for repayment of the advanced funds, and if the nobleman thus assisted cannot redeem his mortgaged property in due time, it is again left to the discretion of the Imperial Council of Guardians to have the property of the nobleman valued by a special committee, and then it is sold to the Crown, which, after refunding itself, hands the residue to the thus ruined nobleman.

This system of paternal accommodation, which the Russian nobility enjoys at the hands of his Majesty the Emperor, fully accounts for the enormous number of Crown serfs, which number has increased since the establishment of the

Imperial Council of Guardians nearly to a million souls.

At the time when Tchichikoff was intrusted with the mortgage of those few hundred serfs, the Council of Guardians had been but recently established, yet much of its operations had already transpired, and circulated among the nobility, and for that reason they were very reluctant to profit by this paternal accommodation. Tchichikoff, in his capacity of agent, had received instructions to conclude the mortgage of the serfs on the most advantageous terms; he therefore thought it proper to dispose everything favourably, (without previously well disposing a few of the Imperial *employés*, it would be hopeless to apply for anything like information, and it is therefore advisable to smooth their throats with a profusion of port and sherry), and thus, having as far as necessary well-disposed every one of the *employés* in the Council of Guardians, with whom he would have to transact business, he explained his errand to be connected with a very peculiar circumstance.

“Half of the serfs I wish to mortgage, have died since my arrival here at Moscow, and I

am therefore alarmed lest there might be some misunderstanding about them later—”

“But allow me to ask you,” said the secretary of the Board of Guardians, “are these two hundred serfs we are now speaking about, included in the census your nobleman has handed in to government, when the last census was taken?”

“Yes, they are included,” answered Tchichikoff.

“If so, I can see no reason why you should feel faint-hearted?” the secretary returned, “if the one dies, another is born, and thus makes up the deficiency.”

Meanwhile, a sublime idea seized upon the imagination of our hero, a thought that had perhaps never occurred to human mind before.

“Oh, I am the very image of simplicity,” he said to himself, “I am looking about for my gloves, and have them already on my hands. Suppose I were to buy up all those serfs that have died lately, and before the new census is taken, suppose I made the acquisition of about a thousand dead serfs, and, suppose the Council of Guardians was to make me the trifling advance of two hundred roubles for

each such serf; that would make a capital of two hundred thousand silver roubles. And now is just my time, an epidemic has but recently ravaged the whole of the country, and, thank Heaven, the number of people that have died from it is not insignificant at all. The country gentlemen have lost much, thanks to their gambling propensities, they have spent a deal in feasting, and have, in fact, ruined themselves most satisfactorily; all seem to have hurried off to St. Petersburg, to seek for appointments at court; their estates are neglected, and are administered any how, the payment of imposts to the Crown becomes with every year more difficult, and therefore, I am led to suppose that they will be glad to cede to me their valueless dead serfs, in order to avoid the payment of the annual tax upon them till the return of the next census; it might even happen that some of them will not only jump at my offer to purchase their valueless stock, but even pay me something extra for my generosity, my philanthropy.

“Nevertheless, and, of course, it is a difficult, a complicated, a dangerous undertaking, for I might easily get myself into serious trouble,

perhaps cause a great scandal, be sent to Siberia . . . . But wisdom and imagination have been given for some purpose to man. That, the most encouraging feature in my speculation, is, that the subject will appear incredible to every one, nobody will ever believe it. It is true, according to a recent ukase, it is impossible to buy serfs without the land they were born upon, nor can they be mortgaged without it. But I mean to purchase them for emigration, yes, for settling them elsewhere, now vast tracts of land are granted for a mere nothing in the provinces of Kherson, and close to the Turkish frontiers.

“It is there that I will settle them; in the government of Kherson; close to the Turkish frontiers; let them live among the heathens. As for their privilege of emigration, that can be done lawfully, and according to the sense of the imperial ukase, all this can be legally settled in the proper courts of the Crown. If they should ask me the proofs of the existence of such serfs? Why not? I shall not be at a loss to do even that, and from the very returns of the census, and with the genuine signature of the Capitan-ispravnick (district judge). The

new village which is to spring so suddenly into existence, I shall call 'Tchichikoff's New Settlement,' or according to the name which I received at my baptism, make from Pavel, 'The Village of Pavlovsk.'"

It is in this manner that the strange idea on which our story is founded, formed itself, in the head of our hero; whether our reader will feel himself under any obligation to him, we do not know; but as for ourselves we must confess, we feel indebted to Tchichikoff for this subject beyond description. Whatever might be said for or against it, without Tchichikoff's idea this novel would never have made its appearance.

Making a devout sign of the cross in the Russian fashion, Tchichikoff set about the execution of his fixed plan immediately. With a view of choosing places of residences, and under other pretences, he set about examining here and there the various corners of our vast Empire, and paid particular attention to those districts where the sufferings and losses from various disasters, such as epidemics, bad harvests, and other causes, had been felt most severely; in a word, he sought for those districts where he



might be able to buy his stock, namely, dead serfs, on the most advantageous terms.

He did not address himself at random to every landed proprietor, and serf-owner, but made his choice among them, and according to the best of his judgment ; or he applied to those men, from whom he had every reason to anticipate no particular scruples about transacting this strange business with him ; he therefore introduced himself to them under the most favourable auspices, made their particular acquaintance, tried to gain their favourable opinion and esteem, so that he might, if possible, obtain from them what he wanted in a friendly manner, and as cheaply as possible.

From this reason, therefore, our reader must not be displeased with us, if the characters that will be introduced to them during the progress of Tchichikoff's career are not entirely to their taste, this is the fault of Tchichikoff, but not ours ; for we are obliged to follow him wherever he chose to go. As for ourselves, if any blame should be cast upon us, for bringing such uncomely characters before a British public, especially at this present critical moment when a war with Russia is being carried on, we can

only express our regret at the fact, but our conscience forbids us to represent our countrymen in any other than the real light.

Such then was the character of our hero, such as circumstances had created it, and the contact with the world and life had fashioned it in later years ! But it is very likely that a positive definition of one of his characteristic traits will be demanded ; what is he really as regards his moral qualifications ? that he is not a hero full of perfections and virtues, we must confess, is obvious at first sight. Who, or what is he then ? he must be a villain ? Why should he be a villain ? Why should we be so severe towards others ? There are no real villains to be met with now-a-day ; there are well disposed persons, agreeable, and even unexceptionable persons, but such persons, as would exhibit their physiognomy to the gaze of the world, and present their cheek for a public box on the ear, of such persons it is likely that two or three might be met with, and then even, they have begun already to speak of the charms of virtue.

We shall therefore be justified in calling our hero ; not like the French a *chevalier d'industrie*,

but in simple English terms ; a gentleman acquirer. Acquisition is the root of a great many evils, and that threatens our peace even now. The desire of acquisition rages now in all classes of society, and especially in Russia, commencing from the Emperor himself, down to his meanest serf, all are mad with a desire for acquisition. Without this desire on the part of the Emperor for the acquisition of Turkey, the nation at large would not have acquired the fanaticism to stand by his side, and back his mad propensity for acquisition ; why should it not be excusable in one of his humble subjects ?

Such then was the object which had brought our friend Tchichikoff to the pleasant town of Smolensk ; the purchase, namely, of dead serfs. During the progress of his schemes, he was thrown into much curious society, and met with numerous queer adventures ; these will form the subject matter of our work. While accompanying our hero on his perilous journey, we shall become acquainted with almost every class of Russian society, and the whole will furnish us at the least with a faithful, if not a flattering,

idea of that nation which holds itself at the present day, as the supporter of the orthodox Church, and future master of the world's destinies.

In itself, the nefarious scheme devised by our hero, affords an extraordinary instance of the cunning inherent in the Russian character, for its whole success was based on the knowledge he possessed of the utter baseness of the national character. None of the actors in this strange drama will appear to exhibit the slightest compunction about defrauding the government, as long as they can gain any slight advantage to themselves, and even the certainty of condign punishment in the very possible event of detection, cannot cause them to refrain from their innate propensity. The fact is an humiliating one, but in our character as the historian of an actual event, we have not dared to omit a single trait which may seem to elucidate our story. We only wish it was in our power to draw a pleasanter portrait of our countrymen, and we fervently trust that the time may yet arrive when such stories as the present one, may be numbered among things that were.

## CHAPTER IX.

MORE than a week had already passed away since Tchichikoff's arrival in Smolensk, during which time he had continued paying morning visits and attending dinner and evening parties, and in so doing, had spent—as the common phrase goes—his time very pleasantly. At last he determined upon extending his civilities beyond the limits of the town, and resolved to turn his attention to the pressing invitations of the landowners in the vicinity; among whom Maniloff and Sobakevitch were those to whom he had made a formal promise. It is very possible too, that this resolution arose from another, a more positive, a graver motive; perhaps, even an affair

of the heart. But of all this the reader may learn more by degrees, and in proper time, if he will only take the trouble, and muster the patience, to read on and follow our traveller on his journeying.

Selifan, the coachman, had received instructions to be ready early in the morning, and to have his horses and the britchka ready to start at a moment's notice; Petruschka, his servant, was ordered to stay at home, and mind his master's apartment and his portmanteau. The reader will not deem it superfluous, we hope, to make the distant acquaintance of these two domestics of our hero, whom he was accustomed to call his men or serfs. Although, and of course, they will not have to appear as prominent characters, or even victims of despotism; yet, their denomination of serfs may serve us as an excuse for exciting the curiosity and sympathy of our courteous reader in their behalf, and for placing them among the third, or even second-rate personages, who are to figure in the adventures of our hero Pavel Ivanovitch Tchichikoff.

Although, the plot, or the links that connect the whole, is not especially founded upon them, still, now and then, they will have to appear in

order to pull us through this long "chain of events;" besides, as we are in England, we like to be minute in everything, and in this instance, and regardless of our being a Russian, we will do our best, and try to be as particular as an Englishman. In addition, the description will demand but little time and space, for it will not be necessary to add much more to that which the reader already knows; we therefore proceed to state at once that Petruschka was accustomed to wear, and to walk about in a large snuff-coloured coat, formerly cast off from the broad shoulders of his master, and that he had, as is common among persons of his calling, a very large nose and broad lips. As regards his character, he was addicted more to the silent system, than inclined to talkativeness; he had a laudable inclination for general information, *i.e.* he was fond of reading books, though he did not care much about their contents; it was a matter of perfect indifference to him, whether it was the adventures of an amorous hero, or simply a spelling, or a prayer-book, he read them all with equal attention; if therefore, a grave work on chemistry had been presented to him, he would have accepted it with equal resignation. It was

not what he read that pleased him, but more the reading itself, or better said, the process of reading, because from the composition of letters, originate words, which again when spelled have a meaning, which many a 'poor devil like Petruschka has every difficulty to understand.

He had the habit of going through his reading process, generally in a recumbent position, which he took up in the anteroom, where he used to stretch himself upon his bed and upon a mattress, which, in consequence of the frequent use and this peculiar indulgence of his, had shrunk into a mere nothing in comparison to its original size, and had actually become as thin as a pancake. Besides his passion for reading, he had two more characteristic habits; he liked to sleep without undressing, just as he was, in the same surtout, and conveying with him a *je ne sais quoi*, an atmosphere of his own, which was not unlike the odour of an over-crowded room, so much so, that it was sufficient for him to put up his bedstead, no matter where, if even in an hitherto uninhabited apartment, and bring into it his cloak and other articles of wardrobe, when suddenly it would seem as



the chamber had been occupied for the last ten years.

Tchichikoff had his peculiarities as well, and was in many instances a man of delicate feelings ; sometimes, when rising early in the morning, he would inhale the air with his refreshed nostrils, but of a sudden he would sneeze and slowly add : " Well, Petruschka, the devil knows it, you seem to perspire strongly. I only wish you would go and take a warm bath." To this, Petruschka made no reply, but tried to busy himself immediately with something ; or he went with brush in hand to his master's dress-coat which was hanging over the door, as if to clean it ; or would arrange or put some of his effects in order. It is difficult to say what he might be thinking of at this precise moment, when he was thus rebuked and silent ; perhaps he thus spoke to himself : " What an original my master is, to be sure, he seems not to be tired of repeating the same observation, fifty times over." Heaven knows ! it is very difficult to tell what a wretched serf thinks at the moment when his lawful master scolds him. However, this is all we have to say at present about Petruschka.

The coachman, Selifan, was quite a different man. However, on second thoughts, we feel rather timid about troubling our reader so much with the affairs of persons of so low a condition, for we know by experience how little inclination there exists to make acquaintance with the lower classes. At any rate that is the case in Russia, where we have ranks of every shade and description, and where a frightful predilection prevails to become acquainted with persons of merely a higher *nuance* of rank, and a bowing acquaintance with a count or a baron of the Empire, is esteemed but too often more valuable than the most intimate ties of friendship.

And thus passing over the coachman, Selifan, we return to our hero, who having given his orders and already made his preparations on the previous evening, awoke the next morning early, washed himself with a wet sponge from top to toe, an operation which he had a particular habit of performing, usually on a Sunday; the day happening to be the one as well on which he shaved himself carefully and even so minutely, that his cheeks looked as smooth and shiny as satin; he put on his coffee-coloured

dress-coat with the gilt brass buttons, and then his travelling cloak with its numerous collars. Thus dressed he descended the staircase, carefully assisted, now on side, now on the other, by the one ever attentive head-waiter, until he took his seat in the britchka.

The travelling carriage drove with great noise from the court-yard into the open street. A passing priest respectfully saluted the traveller, as if giving him his benediction on the road, whilst a few boys in ragged shirts and breeches stretched out their little hands and shouted after him, "Pray, good gentleman, do not forget the wretched orphans." Selifan, the coachman, observing that one of the little urchins was very expert in throwing somersets, gave him a touch with his whip on passing him, and away went the britchka clattering over the stones.

It is with no little pleasure that a traveller beholds in the distance the painted mile posts, which are the limits of the fatiguing pavement and other annoyances on passing through a town; a little more shaking and jolting about in his carriage and Tchichikoff found himself at last upon a more even and pleasanter road. Scarcely, however, had he left the town at his

back when his sight was gratified with, what *we* term, "rural beauty," on either side of the road, such as mole-hills, fir-trees, low and stunted shrubs, and pine groves intermixed and surrounded by juniper and other such trees and bushes. Now and then the scene would be enlivened by the sudden appearance of a village laid out in a monotonous-geometrical order, and resembling in its architecture a huge pile of timber covered over with a grey roof, under which the ornamental wood-carvings forcibly reminded one of the embellishments of a Dutch towel.

Here and there a few mouzhiks might be seen yawning as usual, and sitting upon their sheep-skins before their houses, whilst the women with their fat bodies and cheeks were peeping out from the windows above ; from the lower story of the houses some serious sheep or a sullen pig would exhibit their grave faces. Such are the scenes that present themselves but too often on the high roads of Russia.

After having passed the fifteenth werst, Tchichikoff bethought himself, that it must be about here that, according to the words of Maniloff, his estate and village ought to be

found, but after having passed the sixteenth werst-post he still saw nothing of that which was so minutely described to him, and had it not been for two peasants who were just passing, it is very difficult to say whether Tchichikoff would have found the spot or not. Upon the question being put to them, how far it was to the estate called Zamanilovka, the mouzhiks took off their hats, and one of them, being rather more intelligent than his comrade, for he wore his beard in the pointed style, replied, "It is perhaps Manilovka and not Zamanilovka, that your glory wishes to inquire for?"

"Just so, yes, Manilovka!"

"Manilovka! very well, if you drive on a werst farther, you will be there, that is to say, straight on and then to the right."

"To the right?" now inquired the coachman, in his turn.

"Yes, to the right," replied the peasant, "that will be your road to Manilovka; as for Zamanilovka, such a village does not exist. It is called so, that is to say, its name is Manilovka, as for Zamanilovka you will not find it; straight on before you, you will perceive upon a hill a house built of stone two stories high, in which

lives the master, that is to say the owner of the estate. That then will be Manilovka, but as for Zamanilovka there is no such a place here, and never was." They now drove off in search of Manilovka. They had already gone two wersts, and came to the turning of a private road; they seemed to have passed two, three and even four wersts more, but still they did not behold the stone building that was to be two stories high. Suddenly, Tchichikoff bethought himself that if a person invites a friend to visit him at his estate, situated about fifteen wersts from town, it usually turns out to be at least thirty wersts distance; at any rate, the situation of Maniloff's estate seemed at present to be known but to few.

The dwelling-house of Maniloff's family stood, nevertheless, on a rising hill, quite isolated, that is to say, upon an elevation exposed to all the winds that might be blowing from any quarter; the declivity of the mount upon which the house stood was surrounded by a carefully cut grass-plot, upon which were scattered about a few bushy heaps *à l'anglaise*, shrubs of lilac and yellow accacias; here and there a group composed of five or six birch

trees raised their thin branches and small leaves, thus forming a scanty cupola. From between two such cupolas peered out a pavilion with a flat roof, painted in light green and resting upon wooden columns of a sky-blue colour, with the laconic inscription: "Temple of solitary meditations;" a little lower in the foreground a brook rushed forth noisily from under the green foliage, which is not an uncommon thing in an English garden belonging to a Russian proprietor.

At the foot of the elevation and partly upon its incline, were scattered in the distance and in all directions a number of small grey wooden huts, forming the village; at the sight of these dwellings our hero began—for some reason or other best known to himself—to count them; and on counting their number he found them upwards of two hundred. They were nowhere intersected by trees or shrubs, they presented nothing else but the monstrous appearance of heaps of wood as previously described.

The scene, however, was enlivened by two women, who had tucked up their petticoats in a quite picturesque manner, and fixed them care-

fully to their sides ; they were wading up to their knees through the brook, holding each one end of a ragged net, in which might have been seen a couple of entangled crayfish, and a fat trout ; the women seemed to have some dispute, for they appeared quarrelling and scolding one another. In the distance, on the right hand side of the hill, loomed a dull looking fir-tree forest. The weather even, seemed in harmony with the scenery ; the day was not exactly a dull one, nor could it be called a bright one, the sky was of a peculiarly greyish tint, not unlike the worn-out cloak of a garrison soldier. To complete the tableau, the cock, the prognosticator of the changes in the weather, even seemed out of tune ; regardless of the fact that his head was damaged by the beaks of his fellow-creatures—according to their fashion he was crowing *à tue-tête* and even clapped his tattered wings against his ragged sides.



## CHAPTER X.

ON driving up to the entrance-hall, Tchichikoff perceived the lord of the mansion standing upon the door steps, clad in a long parrot-green coloured surtout, holding his hands over his forehead in lieu of an eye-shade, no doubt for the purpose of concentrating his sight, for the purpose of more minutely examining the arriving carriage. Whilst the britchka was driving nearer towards the house, the eyes of the master seemed to dilate and brighten up by degrees, and his smiles increase in proportion.

"Pavel Ivanovitch," shouted Maniloff, for it was he, when he beheld Tchichikoff stepping

out from the carriage ; “ at last you have been kind enough to remember us.”

Both friends embraced each other most heartily, and Maniloff led his guest into the house. Although the time necessary for going from the outer premises into the anteroom, thence into the dining-room, until they arrived in the regular reception-room, would be rather short, yet we think it an opportune moment, and will endeavour to make the best use of it and say a few words *en passant* about the owner of the estate and mansion. But here we must observe that such an undertaking is fraught with many difficulties. It is far easier to delineate a strongly-marked character ; to picture such a one is easy, for you have simply to throw the following characteristics upon the canvass, such as, black and piercing eyes, overshadowing eye-brows, a frowning forehead, a black, or fire-coloured large cloak thrown as if carelessly over the left shoulder—like Zamiel in “ Der Freischütz ”—and the portrait is finished ; but there are men in this world, and they are numerous, who at first sight are very much alike, but if you look closer, you will find many unattainable traits and peculiarities in them, which are

particularly their own ; to describe this species of men is a very difficult task indeed. With them, it is necessary to use strenuous exertions and the greatest attention, before you are able to delineate even a portion of the fine and nearly imperceptible traits of their character, and in general, it is requisite to set about into such an undertaking with an experienced mind and eye.

Heaven alone, therefore, could, with any correctness portray the character of Maniloff. He seemed to belong to that class of men which we term in Russia among the good-natured ones, "neither a clown in town, nor a fool in the village." At first sight, he was a man of rather prepossessing appearance, and of a pleasing countenance ; but these advantages seemed to have been too much sugared by nature. In his manners and demeanour there was something which courted acquaintance and friendship ; he smiled enticingly ; he was fair, and had blue eyes. In the beginning of a conversation with him it was impossible not to say : "What an agreeable and kind-hearted man !" and the following moment you would say nothing ; whilst in the third you would

most likely exclaim : “ The devil understand the man, and what he means !” and you will leave him ; if you have not that good fortune, you are sure to feel a killing *ennui*. You will not hear from his lips anything amusing, not even an insinuation, which you may hear from any one else, provided you touch but slightly the chord which is most in harmony with his interests.

Every one has his hobby-horse in conversation, as in other matters ; the one has all his passion concentrated upon dogs and horses ; another fancies he is an herculean admirer of music, and acutely feels all its delicate passages ; a third is a *passé maître* in gastronomy ; a fourth endeavouring to play a *rôle*, if but an inch loftier, than the one assigned to him by nature and his position in society ; a fifth, with more moderation in his wishes, meditates how he could manage to be seen on the promenade walking side by side with an imperial colonel, or aide-de-camp, thus to show himself off to his friends known and unknown, in a word, every one has his peculiar ways and manners ; but Maniloff had none.

At home he was accustomed to speak but little, for he seemed always busy thinking and meditating, but what about? that also might be known in Heaven. Nor could it be said that he busied himself in the management of his property, for he never took the trouble to visit his fields or his estate in general; thus, then, agriculture was left to go and find its own way. If his steward spoke to him, and suggested an alteration or improvement, saying, "This or that could or might be done for the better." "Yes, not a bad idea, that of yours, steward," would be his invariable reply, and he continued to smoke his Turkish pipe, a habit which he had contracted at an early age, while serving in the Caucasus, where he was pronounced to be one of the quietest, nicest, and best-bred officers in the regiment; "Yes, not a bad idea, indeed," would he repeat in conclusion.

If one of his peasants came to him, and whilst speaking to his lord and master, scratched his head, and stroked his beard, saying: "Would your glory allow me to go to town in search of work, and better my condition?" "Go," he would reply, and continue to smoke his pipe, for

the idea never occurred to him that his serf came to ask him the privilege of absenting himself, for the purpose of becoming a drunkard.

Sometimes Maniloff would also lean over his balcony, and look silently upon the lawn and noisy brook before him, and then add: "How well it would be if there was a subterranean walk leading from the house, or a stone bridge across the murmuring brook, upon which I should have liked to see little shops on either side, occupied by tradesmen, who could satisfy my peasants' wants." At such and similar thoughts and wishes, his eyes used to fill to overflowing with their peculiar sweetness, and his countenance expressed the greatest satisfaction; these projects, however, remained what they originally were—thoughts and wishes.

In his study, there was always the same book lying on the same place, with a mark on its seventeenth page, which he had acquired the habit of reading for these last two years. In his house there was continually something wanting, either here or there; in the drawing-room there was some superb furniture covered with rich silken damask, which no doubt must have been very expensive; two chairs, however, were to be

seen there, uncovered with this material, no doubt for want of it, and therefore, were left to exhibit their uncovered carcases; nevertheless, Maniloff had every time the politeness to caution his guests not to seat themselves upon any one of them; because, said he, they were not yet ready.

In some of the rooms there was even no furniture at all, although he had often spoken of the necessity of furnishing them, especially during the first weeks after his marriage: "My darling," he used to say to his wife, "my darling, it will be necessary to provide these rooms with proper furniture, if only temporarily, until we get more settled." In the evenings, a candlestick of fashionable appearance—dark bronze, with three small figures, representing the graces, and richly ornamented with mother-of-pearl, would be placed on the table; but, next to it another one—a common brass invalid, shaky, bent down on one side, and greasy all over, yet, without either the master, the mistress, or any of the domestics being aware of it. His wife—however, they seemed perfectly satisfied with each other. Although more than eight years had elapsed since they had lived in

happy matrimony, still they continued to be upon *petits soins* one for another, and exchanged all sorts of sweetmeats and affections, which were offered and accepted in the most touching tones of voice, as for an example: "My darling, open your rosy lips, and I will put this sweet little bit into your mouth." And of course, the pretty little mouth was gracefully opened at such a loving request.

Birth-days were celebrated by exchanging all kinds of agreeable surprises, such as knitted articles and embroideries in silk, wool and pearls, and other ornamental knick-nacks. And very frequently too, whilst the husband was sitting in his easy-chair and his wife on the sofa, either the one or the other party would suddenly rise, heaven knows from what impulse, and leave—he his pipe, and she her needlework, if she happened to have some of it in her hands just at that moment—for the purpose of impressing a tender and such a long and affectionate kiss, that it would have been easy to smoke a pachito during the time this affectionate demonstration lasted.

In short, they were what is commonly called on the happiest terms. Of course, we could



observe, that there are many other occupations in a house besides continued kissing and bickering, fêting birth-days, and exchanges of presents ; and many and various are the questions that could be put as regards a household in general. Why, for instance, is the kitchen department so much neglected ? Why are the provision stores so indifferently attended to ? Why is the housekeeper dishonest, and why are the servants so slovenly and negligent ? Why does the whole batch of domestics sleep so mercifully long, and waste the time during which they are awake ? But all these facts and observations were beneath the notice of Madame Maniloff, for she was well-bred and brought up. And a good education, as is well known everywhere, can only be obtained in a private institution ; and in these institutions, as it is well known again, three principal occupations, or subjects, constitute the foundation of female perfections : the French language, as indispensable to conjugal happiness ; the pianoforte, as a medium to create some pleasant moments to a husband ; and at last, and not least, a general knowledge of household matters : knitting

purses, braces, and embroidering generally, for the purpose of exchanging presents.

There are many changes and improvements in various methods of teaching these indispensable branches of human perfections, particularly in the present time ; all these, however, depend more or less on the clever or judicious management of the proprietors of these modern and fashionable institutions. In some of these places, the three branches above-named are classed in the following order : first, the pianoforte, then the French language, and at last, household knowledge. But in some again it also happens that housekeeping obtains the first rank, *i. e.*, knitting and embroidering of presents ; then follows the French language, and the series is concluded most harmoniously by the pianoforte. It is obvious, therefore, that methods of teaching exist in great variety.

It will not be superfluous to observe also that Madame Maniloff—but I think I will stop here with my further remarks, for I must confess I am afraid to speak of ladies ; besides, it is high time to return to the gentlemen, who have been already standing for some moments before the

door of the reception-room, mutually inviting one another to step in the first.

"Pray do not so much incommode yourself on my account; I shall step in after you," said Tchichikoff.

"No, my dear Pavel Ivanovitch! pray advance; you are my guest," replied Maniloff, pointing civilly with his hand towards the door.

"Do not incommode yourself, I beg you will not. Step before me, if you please," said Tchichikoff.

"No, pardon me, but I shall not suffer such a civil and well-bred guest as you are to follow after me."

"Why, you overwhelm me with civilities! Pray pass on."

"Never mind, do me the favour to walk in first."

"But, my dear Sir, why all these ceremonies?"

"Because—and if you please," said Maniloff again, using now one of his most enticing smiles, whilst continuing his civil gesticulations.

At last, both friends entered the room back-

wards, at the same time squeezing one another gently against the door.

“Allow me to introduce you to my wife,” said Maniloff. “My darling, allow me to introduce to you our friend Pavel Ivanovitch Tchichikoff.”

And in truth, Tchichikoff now beheld for the first time a lady, whom he had not observed during the moments that elapsed whilst he was exchanging complimentary gestures with his host. She was pretty, and dressed with taste. The light *gris de perle* coloured morning *capotte* became her exceedingly well; her finely-shaped hand was in the act of throwing some needlework hastily upon the table, and snatching up instead a fine *batiste* pocket-hankerchief with prettily-embroidered corners and initials. She rose slightly from her seat on the sofa, and gracefully welcomed her guest; and Tchichikoff hastened with evident eagerness to kiss her hand in the old Russian fashion.

Madame Maniloff spoke in a slightly affected tone of voice, and assured her guest that he caused them a real pleasure indeed by his arrival, and that her husband had not allowed a

day to pass without speaking of him, his friend, continually.

"Yes," added Maniloff, "my wife has already several times inquired after you, and even often said, 'Why does your Petersburg friend not come?' 'Wait a little longer, my darling, he is sure to arrive, for he gave me his promise.' At last, you have been kind enough to gratify us with your presence. Indeed, you cause us quite a delight, as pleasant as a May-day, or 'birth-day of the heart.'"

Tchichikoff, on hearing that his host's exaltation had already attained such a pitch as to call his arrival a gratification as pleasant as a "birth-day of the heart," became a little confused, and answered civilly, and in a dignified tone of voice, that he could not boast of a princely name nor of an exalted position.

"You possess all," Maniloff interrupted, whilst sweetly smiling as usual, "you possess all, and even more."

"How did you like our town?" added Madame Maniloff. "Have you spent your time pleasantly?"

"A very charming and pleasant town, my

lady," answered Tchichikoff, "and I have spent a most agreeable week indeed; I have been in the choicest company."

"And how did you like our Lord-Lieutenant?" Madame Maniloff again inquired.

"Is he not one of the most civil and amiable men in our province?" added, in his turn, Mr. Maniloff.

"That is perfectly true," said Tchichikoff; "he is a highly accomplished and estimable man. How well he knows how to enter into the spirit of his exalted position, and how well he understands all his arduous duties! It is desirable to see many more such men administering our country!"

"And how kind and civil he is in his receptions, and how delicate and condescending in his manners;" Maniloff added again, with a smiling face, whilst satisfaction made him nearly close his eyes, like a cat when gently tickled with the finger behind the ear.

"A very condescending and agreeable man indeed," continued Tchichikoff; "and how clever he is, to be sure! I never anticipated that much of him. How well and tastefully he embroiders various household ornaments! He

showed me a purse of his own knitting, and I must confess that I doubt whether a lady could do it much better."

"And the Vice-Governor, is he not an amiable gentleman?" questioned Maniloff, again closing his eyes slightly.

"A very, very deserving man indeed," replied Tchichikoff.

"But allow me to ask you, how did you like the Commissioner of Police? Am I not right in saying he is a very agreeable man?"

"An exceedingly agreeable man, and, at the same time, what a learned, what a well-informed man! I spent an evening at his house, where we played a game at whist with the imperial Procurator and the President of the Courts of Justice: we were assembled till the last cock crowed, and I agree with you, he is indeed a most estimable man."

"And pray, what is your opinion of his wife?" inquired Madame Maniloff. "She is a charming lady?"

"Oh, Madame, she is one of the most worthy ladies with whom I have the honour to be acquainted," replied Tchichikoff with an air of conviction.

After enumerating all these persons in due rotation, and in the manner described, they did not fail to bestow equal praise also upon the President of the Courts of Justice, the Post-master-General, and, in fact, upon all the higher *employés* in the town of Smolensk, who, in their opinion, seemed to be one and all the most respectable and praiseworthy persons in the province, if not in the vast Russian Empire.

“And pray, do you spend all your time here in the country?” demanded Tchichikoff, in his turn, at last, and with the evident attempt to change the subject of conversation.

“Mostly here,” replied Maniloff. “Sometimes, however, we go to town to spend a day or two and pay a few visits, just for the sake of a little recreation and intercourse with civilized society. One is apt to become ‘boorish from living continually shut up in a country residence.’”

“True, very true,” said Tchichikoff.

“Naturally,” continued Maniloff. “It would be a different life if we had some pleasant neighbours, or acquaintance with persons with whom, in some respects, we could have some



friendly intercourse and exchange opinions, talk about life and good company, or have an argument on some scientific subject, and thus stir up the dormant spirit, which again, as you well know, would give an impulse—”

Here he intended to express something more, and be if possible more explicit; but finding that he had lost the thread of his own ideas, he began to gesticulate with his hand in the air, and then continued to speak :

“Then of course the country and retirement would have many still more pleasant attractions. But we have no such persons around us. The only recreation we enjoy now and then is a book or a newspaper.”

Tchichikoff fully agreed with Maniloff's opinion, and added, “That there can be nothing pleasanter than to live in retirement, to delight in the scenes of nature, and to read now and then a good book as a recreation.”

“But allow me to tell you,” said Maniloff, “that having no such friend with whom to exchange—”

“Oh, to be sure, that is true indeed!” interrupted Tchichikoff, “for what are all the treasures of this world? ‘Care not so much

for money as for good connections !' said some clever man somewhere. "

"And you know it, Pavel Ivanovitch !" said Maniloff, whilst giving to his face not only more than its usual expression of sweetness, but even, if possible, an expression not unlike the mixture concocted by a clever physician of the world, who mercilessly sweetens his drugs, in the hope of pleasing his patients all the more. "Then, one feels a sensation—or something not unlike the 'heart's rejoicing'—something like that which I feel now, when chance gives me the felicity—nay, allow me to say, the exceptional gratification of seeing you here, and being delighted with your very pleasant conversation—"

"Pray pardon me, but why do you call me and my conversation so pleasant? I am an humble man, and nothing else," replied Tschichikoff, with great humility.

"Oh, my dear Pavel Ivanovitch, allow me to be candid. I would give away the half of my property, if I could possess but the half of the accomplishments that you can boast of."

"On the contrary, I on my part would esteem it as the highest—"

It is impossible to say to what extent the expressions of mutual esteem and admiration would have been carried between the two friends, if the entrance of a servant had not interrupted them, who came to announce that dinner was ready.

"Allow me to invite you to our table," said Maniloff, respectfully.

"You will excuse us, if we cannot ask you to a dinner like those you have been accustomed to partake of in the metropolis: with us all is simplicity — a modest meal *à la Russe*, but offered with a candid heart," added Madame Maniloff.

Hereupon the two men had again a slight and polite difference as to who should enter before the other, but at last Tchichikoff entered the dining-room backwards.

## CHAPTER XI.

ON their entrance in the dining-hall, they found Madame Maniloff waiting with her two little sons. These children were of that tender age when parents are induced to seat them already among adults, though they still are accommodated with high stools. Near them stood their teacher who bowed courteously and with a smile.

The lady of the house took her seat before the soup-tureen; her guest was placed between herself and husband; the servant tied a napkin under the chin of the little boys, and the dinner ceremonial commenced.

“What pretty little boys!” said Tchichikoff,

after a while, and looking intently at them.  
“What is their age?”

“The elder is in his eighth year, and the younger celebrated his sixth birth-day yesterday,” answered Madame Maniloff, smiling.

“Themistoclus !” said Maniloff, whilst turning towards his elder boy, who was just engaged in liberating his chin from the napkin which the servant had tied too tightly round his neck. Tchichikoff lifted up his head and frowned slightly when he heard this classic name, of which heaven knows why Maniloff had made the final syllable *us* ; however he recovered immediately from his surprise, and his features reassumed their wonted expression.

“Themistoclus, my boy !” repeated Maniloff, “tell me which is the finest town in France?”

Here the teacher directed all the power of his attention upon his pupil thus questioned by his father ; and it seemed as if he intended to pierce him with his glance ; but he gradually calmed down, and soon after nodded approvingly with his head, when he heard Themistocles give the answer :

“Paris.”

"And which is the finest town in Russia?" demanded again Maniloff.

The master fixed his eyes again upon his pupil and frowned.

"St. Petersburg," replied Themistocles, quickly.

"And what town besides?"

"Moscow," again replied the boy with sparkling eyes, for he seemed to be sure of his lesson.

"Now for the last question," said his father, evidently pleased with his child's progresses. "Who are the natural enemies of Russia and of Christendom?"

"The Turks; and we ought to take Constantinople from them," replied Themistocles, with the air of a conqueror, and looking for approval towards his master.

"Oh, the clever darling!" exclaimed Tchichikoff, when he had heard all these replies. "Really," he continued, whilst turning with an air of agreeable surprise towards the happy parents, "I am of opinion that this little boy displays signs of great proficiency."

"Oh, you don't know him half," replied Maniloff; "he possesses a great deal of per-

spicuity. As for the younger son, Alcides, (here Tchichikoff, was startled again as before), "he is not so sharp a boy as his elder brother ; Themistoclus is livelier, and his eyes will sparkle at anything. If even an insect, he will immediately run after it, and pay it the greatest attention. I intend to have him educated for the diplomatic career. Themistoclus," he continued, turning again towards the boy, "would you like to be an ambassador ?"

"Oh yes, papa !" answered the child, with his mouth full of cake, and balancing his head like a Chinese mandarin.

At that very moment, the servant, who stood behind the future ambassador, wiped that young gentleman's nose, and it was well he did so, or else some mishap would have been the consequence. The conversation at table now turned upon the pleasures of domestic life, and was now and then enlivened by the observations of Madame Maniloff on the theatre and the actors of their town.

The teacher listened and looked very attentively upon the conversing parties, and whenever he saw the company laughing at some obser-

vations, he would at once open his mouth and join them in a most hearty approbation. No doubt he was a man with a deep sense of gratitude, and strove to display in this manner his acknowledgment for the treatment he met at the hands of his employer. Once, however, he could not prevent assuming an expression of reproof and knocking gently upon the table, while frowning at his pupils, who sat opposite to him. This was done at an opportune moment, because Themistocles had just bitten the ear of his brother Alcides, who instantly closed his eyes, and opened his mouth, and was on the point of beginning a most lamentable tune ; but seeing the frowning forehead of his master, and fearing he might lose his dinner, he brought back his mouth to its former position, and began to gnaw lustily, with tears in his eyes at a large bone of roast mutton, which made both his cheeks shiny with grease.

The lady of the house frequently encouraged her guest in the following manner :

“ You scarcely eat anything ; you have taken so very little indeed.”

To these observations Tchichikoff would invariably reply :



"I am very much obliged to you, Madame ; I have had plenty—besides, pleasant intercourse surpasses the finest dish."

They at last rose from table. Maniloff seemed exceedingly pleased, and laying his hand gently on the back of his guest, he was on the point of leading him gently into the drawing-room, when the latter suddenly informed him, and with an air of confidential importance, that he had a wish to converse with him on the subject of some important business.

"In that event, allow me to show you into my private room," said Maniloff, and led him into a small adjoining chamber, the windows of which afforded a view of a gloomy fir-tree forest looming in the distance. "This is my own little corner," added Maniloff.

"A very pretty and comfortable room," said Tchichikoff, whilst casting a glance around. The room had really its pleasing features ; the walls were painted of a light blue colour of a greyish tint ; it contained four chairs, one arm-chair, a table ; upon the latter lay the book with the marked page, of which we had already had occasion to speak, a few writing materials, and a quantity of tobacco. That fragrant weed

was laying about in various forms and places, in packages, in pouches and boxes, and lastly even upon the table. Upon both windows numerous little heaps of tobacco ashes from his pipe were ranged, not without taste, in symmetrical order. It was obvious that this arrangement sometimes assisted the master of the house in passing his time pleasantly.

"Pray be seated in this arm-chair," said Maniloff; "here you will be more comfortable."

"I beg you will allow me to prefer this chair."

"Permit me to insist upon your seating yourself in this arm-chair;" said Maniloff with a smile. "This old arm-chair has been assigned by me for my friends; and, therefore, whether you like it or not you must sit down in it."

Tchichikoff seated himself in the arm-chair.

"Will you take a pipe or a cigar?"

"I thank you, but I do not smoke," replied Tchichikoff civilly, as if with an air of regret.

"And pray, why don't you?" inquired Maniloff, also civilly, and with an air of regret.

"I did not contract the habit, I am afraid,

because I was told that smoking originates consumption."

"I beg to observe that this is a prejudice. I am of opinion that to smoke a pipe is by far more healthy than taking snuff. In my regiment we had a lieutenant who was an excellent and well-bred officer, his pipe never quitted him, not even at table—and with your leave—not even at any other place. At present he is more than forty years old, and thank Heaven, as well and healthy as he could wish to be."

Tchichikoff observed that such instances were of frequent occurrence, and that there were many phenomena in human nature, quite incomprehensible to the most cultivated mind.

"But allow me now to put you a question." He then proceeded in a tone of voice in which there was a peculiar and nearly a strange expression, and after having spoken the last words, he, for some reason or other looked around him. Maniloff also looked round, but for what reason he did so, it is impossible to tell.

"How long, may I ask, if you please," continued Tchichikoff, "is it since you last handed

in to government the census of the population on your estate?"

"Oh, if I recollect rightly, it is some time since;" replied Maniloff, "but to tell the truth, I do not exactly remember when."

"And can you perhaps recollect if many of your serfs have died since?"

"I must confess I don't know!" said Maniloff with a little embarrassment; "but I could question my steward about it. Hilloah! Ivan! or some one else, call my steward, he ought to be here to-day."

Soon after, the manager of Maniloff's estate made his appearance. He was a man under forty years of age, with a closely shaved head, fashionably dressed, and evidently enjoying and spending a pleasant existence; because his fat and rosy cheeks seemed to attest that he was well familiar with the comforts of a soft mattress and downy pillows. It was easy to see at a glance that he had accomplished his aim in life, as is usual among men of his calling: early in youth he was but an adopted orphan, charitably brought up in the family of his present master, and instructed in a little reading and writing; later he managed to marry the house-

keeper—a favourite of her ladyship's—contrived to become housekeeper himself, until ultimately he got himself promoted to the rank of steward. And when he had become the general manager of the estate, he did like other stewards do: he frequented and connected himself only with the richer families in the village, exacted more tribute from the poorer, rose at nine o'clock in the morning, heated his samovar and took his tea comfortably.

“I say, my good fellow,” Maniloff addressed himself to his humble steward; “how many of my peasants have died since you sent the last census to government?”

“Your glory wishes to know how many? Since then many have indeed died,” replied the steward, whilst putting his hand before his mouth in lieu of a shield, to screen a slight hiccup, which he was unable to repress.

“Yes, I must confess, I thought as much myself,” added Maniloff; “just so, a great many have died since.” Hereupon he turned towards Tchichikoff, and repeated again: “exactly so, a great many have died.”

“But, about how many in number?” demanded again Tchichikoff.

"Yes, to be sure, how many in number?" repeated Maniloff.

"Yes, your glory; but how could I fix upon the number? It is impossible to say how many, no one has counted them," said the steward again, and with increasing embarrassment.

"Just so," said Maniloff, whilst turning towards his guest; "I anticipated as much; there was a great mortality during these latter years; and I think it is difficult to say with any precision how many have died."

"You had better number the dead, my good man;" Tchichikoff addressed himself to the steward, "and make out a correct list of all, together with their family and christian names."

"Yes, to be sure," added Maniloff adopting the same positive tone of voice as his guest: "and give their names carefully."

"It shall be done, your glory!" replied the steward, and left the room.

"But for what purpose do you want these particulars?" inquired Maniloff, after the steward had left them.

This question seemed to embarrass his guest considerably; his face flushed, his countenance betrayed uneasiness and was altogether striking in its momentary change, and difficult to be described in words. At last Maniloff was obliged to listen to one of the strangest and most extraordinary proposals to which human ears were ever yet fated to listen. "You wish to know for what purpose? The reasons are the following: I should like to purchase some serfs—" said Tchichikoff, whilst recovering gradually; but scarcely had he uttered the last word, when he had a sudden attack of his cough, and did not, of course, conclude the phrase.

"But allow me to ask you," continued Maniloff, "on what condition do you wish to purchase peasants, is it together with the land they live upon, or do you want them for colonisation elsewhere, that is to say, without the land they live upon?"

"No, that is not exactly what I mean," replied Tchichikoff, after a moment's hesitation, "what I wish to purchase, are dead serfs."

"What? pardon me—I am rather deaf in

one ear, but it seemed to me as if I had heard the strangest words that could possibly be spoken."

"Strange, perhaps," added Tchichikoff, more coolly than might have been expected after his first agitation; "yes, my dear sir, I have a wish to make the acquisition of the dead—who, however, must stand booked as existing or living in the columns of the last governmental census."



## CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Maniloff was convinced that he had rightly heard and understood what his friend had just spoken, he could not prevent his Turkish pipe dropping upon the floor and opening his mouth and eyes as widely as they would allow themselves to be opened; he remained passively thus for a few seconds. Both friends, who, but shortly before, had been familiarly discoursing on the pleasures of friendly life and intercourse, were now sitting opposite one another immoveably, gazing into each others eyes as if mesmerized, or like those portraits which in olden times were hung on either side of the looking-glass.

At last Maniloff mustered animation again, picked up his pipe, and, while doing this, he looked up seriously into the face of his companion, striving to catch, if possible, a smile upon his lips, as if to convince himself that all was but a jest; however, he could discover nothing to confirm him in this hope; on the contrary, Tchichikoff's face looked, if possible, more serious and composed than usual; at last he thought it likely his guest might have become the victim of a fit of insanity, and as this idea occurred to him he looked with the utmost terror fixedly at him.

But no, Tchichikoff's eyes were perfectly calm and bright, there was no wildness nor uneasiness in his glance, such as there would be in the gaze of a madman; all his mental faculties seemed to enjoy perfect health. Maniloff was at a loss what to imagine next, in order to account for the strange words and intention he had heard; but he could hit upon nothing to relieve him of his anxiety, except, letting the tobacco smoke, which the sudden surprise had made him swallow, unconsciously escape in thin wreaths.

"And thus then should I like to know if you would agree to part with such of your

serfs as are actually dead; that is to say, not actually living, but nevertheless existing in a point of law; I am ready to make such arrangements about them as would be most agreeable to you."

But Maniloff was still so much overwhelmed and confused, that he could do nothing else but stare into the face of the speaker.

"You seem to feel embarrassed?" observed Tchichikoff, slowly.

"I?—no, not exactly," Maniloff at last murmured; "but I cannot comprehend—excuse me—I did not of course enjoy such a brilliant education, such a one—if I might express myself so—as is visible in every one of your movements; I have no talent for choice expressions—it might be also, that here—in this instance and in the manner in which you have just now chosen to express yourself—that there is something hidden—the meaning of which, I must confess, I could not catch, and I must presume that you have chosen to express yourself in this manner for the sake of a more select construction of your phrase—"

"Oh no, my dear Sir, no," interrupted Tchichikoff, "not at all, my proposal is like the

phrase, pure and simple ; I positively mean that what I said, namely : I wish to possess such serfs as are positively dead."

Maniloff was now actually lost in amazement ; yet he felt that it became incumbent on him to do or say something ; but what was he to do, what was he to say ?—Heaven alone could inspire him. He finished at last by allowing another cloud of tobacco smoke to escape, but not as previously, out of his mouth, for this time the smoke evaporated from his nostrils.

"And now, if you have no objection, we might at once come to an understanding and proceed to draw up the contract of sale," said Tchichikoff.

"What ? a contract of sale, for the dead ?"

"Oh, no, my dear Sir, no," replied Tchichikoff, with slight impatience. "We shall write down, and presume them to be living, for such they actually are represented to be in the last census of the whole population of the Empire, and consequently, also in a point of law as well. I am accustomed never to make the slightest deviation from our laws—either civil or military—though I have suffered much for this prin-

ciple when I was in actual service myself, and allow me to assure you, my duty has always been a sacred obligation to me; the law—I never deviate from it.”

These last observations very much pleased Maniloff, and reassured him considerably; but notwithstanding this assurance, it was impossible for him to enter into the spirit of the business proposed to him, and instead of an answer, he began to smoke so fast, that the room was soon filled with a dense fog, and the head of his pipe became so heated, that it began to crackle like a hoarse bassoon. It seemed as if he wished to inhale from his pipe an opinion upon the unprecedented project of his guest; but to no purpose, his pipe continued its crackling noise as before.

“You have, perhaps, your doubts on the subject?” said Tchichikoff.

“Oh! I can assure you, not the least,” rejoined Maniloff. “Do not think for a moment that I could have the slightest reason to form any critical opinion as regards yourself. But allow me to ask you, will this speculation, or, in order to explain myself more distinctly—this negotiation—yes, will this negotiation not be in

contravention to the civil laws and the future views and welfare of the Russian Empire?"

After having spoken thus, Maniloff made a few peculiar movements with his head, and looked steadfastly into Tchichikoff's face, showing in all the lineaments of his features, and in his compressed lips, such an undefinable expression, as perhaps never was beheld on a human face before; and if such an expression could find its equal, it could, perhaps, only be seen on the faces of those clever statesmen of all nations, who at the present day are discussing the political differences between Russia and Turkey.

Tchichikoff, however, answered simply, that such a speculation, or negotiation, would in no ways be in contravention with the civil or military laws of the country, and the future welfare of Russia; and a moment later he added, that on the contrary, the government would even derive an advantage, because it would receive the payment of the lawful capitation tax.

"Well, then, you think that —?"

"I am of opinion that all will be right and and well," said Tchichikoff again.

"Ah, if it is all right, then it is altogether a different thing; then I can have no objection whatever," said Maniloff, and recovered even so far as to assume his usual smile.

"Now we shall only have to fix upon a price—"

"How—a price?" said Maniloff with a new air of surprise, and stopped short for a while. "Is it possible that you could think that I would take money for such serfs, who, in some respects have already ceased to exist, and consequently, have become valueless to me? No, since you have a strange fancy for them, or, if I might use the expression, a phantastical wish for them, I am quite agreeable to deliver them up to you gratuitously, and am even ready to pay the expense of the contract of sale, in order to be agreeable to you."

We should deem it the greatest act of negligence on our part, if we were to omit mentioning in the narrative of these events, that the words thus spoken by Maniloff had the effect of diffusing an extraordinary amount of gratification over the countenance of his guest. However circumspect, self-possessed and prudent Tchichikoff habitually was, yet in this instance

he had every difficulty in mastering a feeling which nearly made him jump from his seat like a goat, and such an attempt could certainly only be caused by an excess of joy. He turned so suddenly in his arm-chair that the woollen covering of the pillow was torn in consequence ; even Maniloff could not help looking at him with some fresh bewilderment. Impelled by gratitude, he gave so many thanks, that the donor of the gift could not help blushing deeply, made a negative movement with his head, and then only found words to say, that, what he gave was a mere trifle.

“Not at all a trifle,” replied Tchichikoff, warmly pressing the donor’s hand.

Here a deep sigh was also allowed to escape from his broad chest, and it seemed as if this sigh was full of the warm effusions of his feeling heart ; not without some feeling and expression in his language Tchichikoff, continued in the following words :

“If you knew, my dear Sir, what a favour you have granted me by this apparently trifling obligation . . . . to me, a man without name or fame . . . . Yes, truly, how much have I not suffered ? like a bark amidst the boisterous



waves of the agitated ocean . . . . What tribulations, what persecutions have I not experienced, and how many and bitter were the sorrows that I have tasted ! but why ? would you perhaps ask me ? Because I always watched over truth, because I kept my conscience pure, my honour intact ; because I stretched forth my hand to assist the mourning widow, and shielded the deserted orphan !”

Hereupon Tchichikoff could not help arresting the progress of a falling tear with his pocket-handkerchief.

Maniloff, too, was nearly moved to tears on hearing this eloquent language. Both friends pressed each other's hands long and warmly, and they looked long and silently into each other's eyes, in which a few more tears might have been seen glittering. Maniloff seemed not disposed to part with the hand of our hero, and continued to press it so warmly, that the other did not know how to liberate it. At last he succeeded in extricating it gently, and said that it would now be a good thing to conclude the contract of sale at once, and that it would be desirable that Maniloff should come for that purpose to town at his earliest con-

venience. He then rose, took his hat, and began to bow a farewell.

“What? are you going to leave us already?” said Maniloff, who had scarcely recovered from his emotion before he was frightened again.

At that moment, Madame Maniloff entered her husband’s study.

“Lisinka,” Maniloff exclaimed, with a rather pitiable expression in voice and countenance, “Pavel Ivanovitch wishes to leave us!”

“Because, perhaps, we do not entertain our guest well enough,” remarked Madame Maniloff.

“My lady, here,” said Tchichikoff, “here, in this spot,” saying these words, he laid his hand upon his heart, and continued: “Yes, here shall for ever remain the recollection of the pleasant moments I have passed in your company; and believe me, there would be no greater felicity for me in this world, than to live—if not in the same house with you, at least in your immediate neighbourhood.”

“Ah! my dear Pavel Ivanovitch,” said Maniloff, whom this idea on the part of his friend seemed rather to please, “that would really be excellent, delicious, if we could live together

under the same roof, or under the shadow of the same poplar, and philosophise on some subject, or launch ourselves into—”

“Oh, that would be like living in Paradise!” exclaimed Tchichikoff with a sigh. “Farewell, my lady!” continued he, whilst pressing his lips upon the hand of Madame Maniloff; “farewell, most esteemable friend! Pray do not forget our little business!”

“Oh, be sure of it!” replied Maniloff. “I do not bid you farewell for more than two days at the most.”

All three entered again the reception-room.

“Farewell, my pretty little darlings!” exclaimed Tchichikoff, when he beheld Alcides and Themistocles once more, who were engaged playing with a wooden dragoon, who thanks to them, had already lost his hands and nose.

“Farewell, my little pets, you must excuse me this time for not having brought you something, because, I must confess, I was not aware of your existence; but, the next time I come, you may depend upon it, I shall surprise you with something nice to play with. To you I will bring a sword; would you like to have a sword? eh—”

"Oh, yes," replied Themistocles.

"And you shall have a drum ; I know you would like to have a drum—eh ?" he continued, bending down to Alcides.

"Drum—bum—bum," answered Alcides, as if he had it already.

"Very well then, I will bring you a drum, it shall be such a nice drum, that you will be able to play any tune upon it, and then you may turr-r-rurr-rurr and tratata upon it as long as you like. Farewell my little darlings ! farewell !"

Hereupon he kissed the little boy upon the head, and turned with a smile towards Maniloff and his wife, with a smile like that usually assumed by persons who wish to convey to loving parents the innocent wishes of their children.

"Pray, dear Pavel Ivanovitch," said Maniloff, when all had already passed through the entrance, "pray, stay with us, look at the dark clouds around."

"These are but a trifle, they do not alarm an old traveller like myself," replied Tchichikoff.

"But do you know the road to Sobakevitch's estate ?"

"Indeed, no, I was about asking you that question."

"Allow me then, I will immediately explain it to your coachman." Hereupon Maniloff very civilly explained to Selifan where he would have to drive his master to. The coachman finally understood, that he would have to pass two turnings and take the third, then took off his hat and exclaimed ; "Thanks to your glory and long health !"

Tchichikoff drove off, and was saluted with wavings of pocket-handkerchiefs by his amiable hosts until they were out of sight.

Maniloff continued to stand and linger upon the stone steps before his house for some considerable time, and followed with his eyes the now fast disappearing britchka, and when he had already completely lost sight of it, he still continued to gaze into the distance and smoke his pipe. At last he entered the house and went into his own room, where he seated himself upon a chair opposite to the seat occupied previously by his guest ; he began to give way to reflections, and was heartily rejoiced that he had had an opportunity of having been agreeable to his new acquaintance.

After having thus meditated for some time, his thoughts began to wander upon some other subject, until at last he lost himself, heaven knows in what reflections. He also thought of the blessings of friendly intimacy; he began to imagine, how pleasant it would be to live together with a faithful friend on the banks of some silvery stream; he then began to construct a stone bridge across his imaginary river, and concluded by building a splendid castle in the Spanish style, so high and beautiful, that he could behold Moscow the Holy from its turrets; nor did he forget either to imagine a magnificent Venetian balcony, where he beheld himself and his bosom friend, comfortably taking tea in the evening, and smoking real Turkey whilst having a pleasant argument. He continued to imagine, that he and Tchichikoff received an invitation to an evening party from some high functionary, and that they drove up to his house in a splendid carriage and four, that they were received in the best company; and finally, that one of the imperial ministers (of the foreign cabinet,) being informed of the exemplary friendship existing between the two friends, informed his Majesty the Emperor of its existence, and that they

were promoted to the rank of generals in consequence. Thus he continued to dream on, until at last he lost himself again in his *châteaux d'Espagne*.

But suddenly he recovered his consciousness, thanks to the extraordinary application of his friend Tchichikoff, which he could not forget on any account; though it was of no use for him to think and study the nature and purpose of this strange whim of his friend, for he could not, either explain to himself the object, nor find the solution of this extraordinary negotiation as he still termed it, in his own mind. Thus he continued to sit in the same chair and smoke his pipe until he was called to supper, and went to bed at a late hour.

## CHAPTER XIII.

TCHICHIKOFF was reclining comfortably, and in an excellent temper of mind in his britchka, which was now rolling rapidly along the high road. In the preceding chapters a little something has already transpired with reference to what his principal object consisted in, what his taste and inclination were, and for that reason it cannot be surprising that he, soon after his departure from Maniloff's house, plunged body and soul into a reverie upon what had passed between himself and his new friend.

Supposition, circumspection, anticipation seemed in turn to occupy his mind; and his speculations must have been of a pleasant



nature, for his face betrayed it; and he seemed, as it were, to smile inwardly. Thus engrossed with his own thoughts, he did not pay the slightest attention to his coachman Selifan, who in his turn and in consequence of the excellent reception which he had met with among Maniloff's servants, was engaged in giving a lecture peculiar to himself, to the tiger-spotted outside horse, the reins of which he held fast in his right hand.

This tiger-spotted horse, as he used to call it, was, in his opinion a very sly and vicious animal indeed, for it only pretended to pull as hard as its two helpmates, whilst the brown insider or leader, who was of a more straightforward disposition, was doing his work most heartily. The natural fondness of Russian coachmen for their horses, goes frequently so far that they will speak to them as if to rational beings, and such a discourse, if it may be called so, took place between Selifan and his three horses that were attached before the britchkha.

"Oh, you artful scamp; but wait a moment, I'll dodge you!" said Selifan, rising slightly upon his seat and giving a smack with his whip to the idler. "I'll teach you what your duty

is, you German pantaloons. The brown one is a respectable horse, for he is doing his work like a horse, and I shall give him with pleasure an extra measure, because he is an honourable horse, and so is the leader too. Na, nuh! you are shaking your head, are you? You are a fool; listen, I'll tell you, when you are spoken to! for I shall not teach you anything that is wrong, you Master Careless! Look up! where you are going!"

Here he gave him another hearty correction with his whip and added: "Oh, you robber of a horse!" After this he indulged all three with a shout as the Jamtchicks are accustomed to do. "Halloah yo, my darlings!" and laid the whip gently across their shoulders, but not with a feeling of anger, but by way of encouragement, as if satisfied with all three. Having thus shown them a little of his approbation, he again addressed his observations to the tiger-spotted idler.

"No, my fine fellow, you must be steady if you wish the world to acknowledge your merits. Look you here and listen; at the gentleman's house where we have been, there are some worthy people, and such persons I like to speak

to and have some intercourse with; because everyone likes to be on friendly terms with good people. I had tea with them and ate and drank many a good thing there, because it gives me pleasure to do so among worthy people. A virtuous man meets with due respect everywhere. Look for an example at our master, he is esteemed by everybody; because, now, will you listen? because he served his country and the Emperor well, and is now a Councillor of State in consequence."

Thus reasoning, Selifan lost himself at last in the most abstract arguments. And if Tchichikoff had been listening he might have heard the most curious and interesting observations concerning himself personally; but his thoughts were so much occupied with his own projects, that a sudden and loud clap of thunder alone could awake him to the scene around him, and cause him to look up again at the exterior world; the sky was covered with heavy dark clouds in all directions, and the dusty high road became sprinkled with heavy rain-drops. Soon after the thunder-peals were more frequent, they grew louder and nearer, and at last the rain came down as if out of a bucket.

At first the rain came sideways, and fell heavily on the left flank of the britchka, then it changed suddenly and washed its other side, until at last it began to fall horizontally upon the leathern roof of the carriage and continued to drum upon it with renewed power, and the drops at last reached even the face of our traveller. This induced him to draw down the leathern blind with its round glass holes, through which he began to examine the scenes around him and give the order to Selifan to drive quicker. Selifan also, had been unpleasantly interrupted in the midst of his reflections, and without losing an instant he produced from under his seat a something in the shape of a miserable-looking grey cloth cloak into the tattered sleeves of which he slipped his arms as speedily as the numerous holes would allow him to do, and then snatching up again the reins, he used once more his whip; and his troika sped on again with fresh vigour, as if the rain as well as Selifan's mode of encouraging them had had the most invigorating effects upon the horses.

As for Selifan, he could not for the life of him remember whether he had passed the

second or the third turning. Imagining a great deal and recollecting a little of the road he had just passed, he guessed that he had already left many a turning on either side of the road behind him. Thus then like many Russians, never at a loss for imagination what to do next in a decisive moment, and without venturing into long speculations, he took the first turning to his right and shouting again: "halloah yo, my darlings!" he drove his horses into a full gallop, never caring for a moment, whither this road may lead him next.

The rain seemed to have set in with the appearance to last for sometime. The dust of the high-road was now converted into a thick paste of mud, and with every moment it became more difficult for the horses to pull through it. Tchichikoff already began to feel uneasy at not seeing anything yet of Sobakevitch's estate, for, according to his calculations, they ought to have been there long ago. He tried again to look through the glass holes of his leather curtains; but to no purpose, it seemed as if an Egyptian darkness surrounded them.

"Selifan!" he at last shouted and popped his head out through the curtain.

"What does your glory wish?" replied Selifan.

"Look about you, don't you see the village yet?"

"No, your glory, I cannot see it anywhere." After having spoken thus, Selifan belaboured his horses once more and began a song—no, rather a tune, like the "*Lieder ohne Worte*" of Mendelssohn Bartholdy—without an end. In this tune were comprised all the sounds of approbation and reproach addressed to all the horses by their drivers, throughout the vast expanse of the Russian Empire, from one extremity to the other; suitable under all circumstances just as it comes to the mind and upon the tongue, naturally, without choice or preparation.

Meanwhile, Tchichikoff began to feel that his britchka was balancing about on all sides, and dealt him many an unpleasant shaking and severe knocks; these unpleasant sensations brought him to the conclusion that they must have deviated from the high-road, and were now driving over some uneven field. Selifan seemed also to be under the same impression, however, he did not say a word about it.

"You blunderbuss, upon what road are you driving me now?" Tchichikoff inquired angrily.

"What am I to do, your glory! it is so very dark, indeed, I cannot even see my whip!" Saying this, he drove the britchka so carelessly that it was nearly upset from the sudden shock, and Tchichikoff was obliged to cling with both hands to his seat. Then, and not till then, it was that he conjectured his coachman Selifan was not sober.

"Stop, stop, you will upset me!" he cried out to him.

"Oh, no, your glory! how could I? how could I upset your honour?" said Selifan. "It is a bad thing to be upset, I know it well myself; how could I therefore upset you, I certainly shall not upset you." Hereupon he began cautiously to turn the britchka round and round again, until he had at last succeeded in turning it all upon one side. Tchichikoff fell out of his carriage and lay there with his hands and feet deeply imbedded in the mud. Selifan had, however, succeeded in stopping his troika, though the horses would have done so, no doubt, from their own accord, for they seemed very much exhausted.

Such an unexpected mishap had completely bewildered him ; he crept down from his seat and posted himself before the britchka, with both his hands firmly fixed on his sides, whilst his master was still trying to raise himself up again upon his legs ; thus glancing for a moment upon his master and the carriage before him he added with an air of incredible surprise : “ And I have upset him ! ”

“ You are as drunk as a trooper ! ” exclaimed Tchichikoff.

“ Oh, no, your glory ! how could I be drunk ? I know it is a bad thing to be drunk, I have been talking to some friends, that is true ; but then, it is a good thing to speak to worthy men, in that there can be no harm. I must confess we had a bit and a sup, but then there can be no harm in having something to eat and drink with worthy people.”

“ But what did I tell you the last time you got drunk—eh ? Have you forgotten it ? ” inquired Tchichikoff.

“ Oh, no, your glory ! how could I have forgotten what you told me ? I know my duty well. I know, it is bad to get drunk. I have



only been speaking to some worthy friends, because I—”

“Only wait until you get a good thrashing again,” interrupted Tchichikoff; “and then you will know what it is to speak to worthy people.”

“Just as it may please your glory!” replied Selifan, with an air of resignation, “if I am to have a thrashing, I must, have it; I shall not escape it. And why should I not be punished, if it is my fault, you as my master have a right to do so. It is also necessary that mouzhiks should be punished, now and then, to keep them in subordination and good order. If it is my own fault, then it is but just that I should be punished; and why should I not receive a thrashing?”

To such logical reasoning, his lawful master could not possibly imagine what he was to reply. But at that very moment also, it seemed as if Providence itself had taken his pitiable position into commiseration. In the distance the loud barking of dogs was audible. Tchichikoff, overjoyed, gave immediate instructions to his coachman that he should drive on at full

speed. A Russian driver has often an excellent sense of presentiment instead of the sense of sight ; for that reason it often happens that he will close his eyes, drive on full gallop, and yet arrive somewhere. Selifan, without hearing or seeing anything, had nevertheless succeeded in guiding his horses upon a road which led them straight into the village ; and they stopped only then, when the horses and britchka came violently in contact with the gates of a house, and when it was already impossible to drive on any further.

All that Tchichikoff could perceive through the dark flood of rain was the roof of a house ; he immediately ordered Selifan to go and find out the gates, which, no doubt, would have taken him a considerable time, if in Russia we had not excellent country dogs, instead of drowsy porters, who, in this instance, announced the arrival of our strangers so loudly, that Selifan himself was obliged to stop up both his ears. A light began to dawn in one of the windows and threw a foggy glimmer straight in the direction of our travellers, who were able to find the gates at last.

Selifan began to knock, and soon after a small gate was opened through which the head

of a figure wrapped in a sheep-skin made its appearance, and master and servant were obliged to listen to a woman's creaking voice, uttering the question of: "Who is there? and why are you making all this noise?"

"We are travellers, my good woman, allow us to pass the night here," Tchichikoff pronounced in a faint voice.

"What hurried travellers you seem to be, for look here at the time of night!" the old woman again said, "besides, this is not an inn, a noble lady resides here."

"What are we to do, good mother—you perceive we have lost our way; and surely you cannot expect us to sleep on the steps."

"Yes, the night is dark, and the rain is pouring down in torrents," added Selifan.

"Be silent, you fool," said Tchichikoff.

"But who are you?" demanded the old woman.

"I am a nobleman, good woman."

The word, nobleman, seemed to startle the old woman, and make her reflect. "Wait a little, I'll go and tell her ladyship," the old female muttered, and in a few minutes later she made her appearance, again, with a lantern in

her hands. The gates were thrown open. A light even began to glitter in another window.

The britchka entered the court-yard, and stopped before a small house, which it was impossible to examine more particularly on account of the utter darkness around it. Only one portion of it was dimly illumined by the light proceeding from the window, a puddle formed by the heavy rain and flowing rapidly along before the house, was also visible in the same light. The rain pattered noisily upon the wooden roof, and streamed in loud jets into a large water-tub. Meanwhile, the house dogs joined into a loud discordant howling; the one threw his head back and set up such a long and plaintive howl, as if he were, Heaven knows generously paid for it; another replied to the first in a particular hoarse voice, as if he had already done his best in the concert; whilst a third joined them with a shrill ringing tone, not unlike a post-horse bell; it seemed to be the tenor voice of a juvenile dog; and all their canine voices were drowned at intervals by a deep base bark, undoubtedly a paternal barker, provided with an inexhaustible dogish nature, because he rattled away his tune in such a de-

terminated manner, that it would forcibly remind one of a counter-bass voice in a concert, when in the full tide of tone, the tenor raising himself on tip-toes, impelled by a strong desire to sing forth his highest note, and all in fact raise themselves, and their voice as high as possible. At such decisive moments, whilst they throw their heads back, the tenor alone will be sometimes original, and hide his unshaved chin in his white neck-cloth, sit down, or bend forward nearly to the ground, and yet send forth from his hiding place, his note, as loud and audible as to shake the very windows of the concert-room.

From the simple barking of these canine musicians, it was easy to surmise that the village must have been something extraordinary, too; but our wet and frozen hero thought for that moment of nothing else but a warm bed. The britchka had had scarcely time to stop before the entrance of the house, when he already hastened to alight, and jumped cleverly upon the landing, gave himself a considerable shaking, and nearly fell the to ground.

## CHAPTER XIV.

ANOTHER woman, rather younger, but very much like the first in appearance, now made her exit from the house upon the landing-steps before it. She led the stranger into the house, and then into a room. Tchichikoff cast two hasty glances around him whilst entering; the apartment was decorated with old and old-fashioned striped paper-hangings. Between the windows there were some pictures representing various species of birds; small rococo-fashioned looking-glasses, with dark frames, in the shape of curled leaves were suspended in a great variety around on the walls; behind each of them, or rather in the frames, were placed,

either letters, an old pack of cards, or a stocking; an old clock with Roman figures, intermixed with flowers, also hung on the wall and was ticking loudly. It was impossible to notice more with two glances only.

Besides Tchichikoff felt as if some one had besmeared his eyes with honey, for he had the greatest difficulty in keeping them open. A few minutes later, and the lady of the house made her appearance. She was an elderly person, and entered with a species of nightcap and a flannel hurriedly thrown round her neck. She was one of those noble ladies who reside on their estates, because she was not rich enough in her opinion to live in town—one of those old women who continually complain of bad harvests and severe losses in their household, and who have the habit of keeping their heads bent on one side, whilst they meanwhile know how to heap money into narrow bags, and hide them in all the drawers and upon all the shelves available. In one of these little bags, they will keep nothing else but the shiny silver roubles, in another only the half-roubles, in a third again a few golden imperials, and so on till they have a whole collection of all the coins of the Empire.

At first sight, it would seem that these drawers contain nothing else but articles of wardrobe, such as night-caps, stockings, linen, night-gowns, reals of cotton, old silken cloaks cut up for the purpose of being transformed into a gown, as soon as the one in use is worn out or burnt somewhere at the elbow, whilst the old lady was superintending the baking and cooking of holiday pastries. But they are too careful; the old gown does not run with them the risk of being burnt or worn out at the elbows, or anywhere else so soon; and the careful old lady generally leaves the cut up silken cloak for some smiling niece or widow-sister, together with her little bags containing the collection of all these precious coins as well as her night-caps, sacks and cottons.

Tchichikoff apologised, and begged to be excused for arriving so late at night.

“Never mind, never mind,” said the old lady; “in what wretched weather Heaven has brought you here! After such fatigues it would certainly be desirable to eat and drink something warm, but it is so very late that it will be quite impossible to prepare anything.”

The last words of the matron were inter-



rupted by such a strange, hissing noise that her guest could not help feeling frightened; this peculiar alarming sound resembled the hissing of serpents, which seemed to have made a sudden appearance in the room; but on looking upwards, Tchichikoff felt tranquilized, for he discovered that the antique clock hanging on the wall was on the point of making an attempt to strike. After this strange hissing, immediately a rattling, and at last, after mustering all its mechanical strength, the clock succeeded in striking two; but with such a sound, that it seemed as if some one was striking with a stick against a broken saucepan. After this effort of the time-piece, the pendulum again continued its usual monotonous tick-tack as before mentioned.

Tchichikoff bowed courteously and thanked the old lady for what she said, and begged to assure her that he wanted nothing so much as a bed, and was only anxious to know in what part of the country he was, and how distant the estate of his friend Sobakevitch might be from her estate. Upon this inquiry, the old lady replied, that she had never heard of such a name, and that she was of opinion that such

a person was not to be found anywhere around in her neighbourhood.

“The name of the landowner Maniloff is perhaps better known to you?” Tchichikoff remarked.

“And who is Maniloff?”

“An owner of some extensive estates, my good Madam.”

“No, I have not heard of such a name either—he does not live here about.”

“And pray, what country gentlemen have you in your neighbourhood?”

“We have Bobroff, Svinin, Kanapatieff, Harpakin, Trepakin, Pleschakoff, Senunoff—”

“And pray, Madam,” Tchichikoff interrupted her quickly, anxious to avoid the recitation of a catalogue of names, “are they rich and wealthy?”

“No, my dear Sir, there are but few rich or wealthy among them. Some of them have about twenty to thirty, others again from forty to fifty serfs; but of those who possess about four hundred peasants there are very few.”

Tchichikoff perceived at once that he had arrived into a quite out-of-the-way neighbour-

hood. "How far am I from town my good lady?"

"About sixty wersts. How sorry I am, to be sure, that I have nothing eatable to lay before you; would you perhaps like to take a cup of tea?"

"I am very much obliged to you indeed, but at the present moment I wish for nothing else but a bed."

"You are right, after such an unpleasant journey, nothing could be more desirable, I therefore invite you, my good Sir, to make yourself as comfortable as possible upon this sofa. Fetinia, bring a feather mattress, a pillow, and some blankets. In what awful weather providence has been pleased to send you to me! What a thunder-storm! I have kept my candle burning all night long before the image of my patron-saint. But, my good Sir, you are covered with mud like a wild boar all over your back and left side! Where have you been pray, to appear in such a disorderly state?"

"Thank heaven that I am only besmeared and that my sides are whole."

“Oh ye, my good saints, what horrors! But do you not want something to rub your back with?”

“I thank you, my good lady, I thank you very much indeed; but pray do not incommode yourself any further on my account, I shall only ask you to tell your maid to dry and clean my coat to-morrow.”

“Do you hear, Fetinia?” said the old lady, turning to the younger woman, who entered the room that moment with a candle in her hand, and who had already previously brought in the things her mistress had ordered. She was now in the act of beating up with both hands an enormous feather-bed, which, in consequence of being thus handled, sent forth a cloud of down, which instantly filled the room. “You must take that gentleman’s clothes to-morrow morning, and dry them well before the fire, as you did with those of your late master, and then rub the mud out carefully, and clean them properly.”

“Very well, my lady!” answered Fetinia, whilst spreading the blankets over the mattress, and pulling the pillow on the bed.

“Now, Sir, your bed is ready,” said the old

matron, after having cast a careful glance over it. "Farewell, my good Sir, I wish you a pleasant night and rest. But is there, perhaps, anything you would wish for yet? You might perhaps be accustomed, my good gentleman, or like to have your feet scratched by somebody. My late husband would never go to sleep unless this was done to him."

But her guest was so rude as to decline having his feet tickled. The old lady retired, and Tchichikoff began to undress himself immediately, handing over to Fetinia all that he stripped himself of, and it consisted of every article of clothing; Fetinia, after having wished him a good night's rest in her turn, took the wet paraphernalia of our hero and retired also, closing the door after her.

When Tchichikoff was thus left alone, he looked, not without a great deal of satisfaction, upon his couch, which nearly reached to the ceiling; Fetinia seemed to be a clever hand at beating up a feather mattress. He approached his bed and got upon a chair close to it, from this he precipitated himself into it, and felt descending to the floor; the sudden pressure of his body upon the mattress had the effect of

sending forth again a new volley of down, which filled every corner of the small room.

After having blown out his candle, Tchichikoff rolled himself up in his blankets like a new-born child is wrapped up in its linen, and fell immediately fast asleep. He awoke the next morning at a very late hour; the sun was shining through his window straight into his face, and the flies, which the previous night had slept quietly in their corners on the walls and ceiling, now began to turn all their attention upon our hero; one of them took its seat upon his lips, another upon his ear, and a third seemed to study how it could manage to gain footing upon his eye, but those which had had the imprudence to come too close to his nose, became the victims of their own folly, for he inhaled them whilst taking breath, unconsciously, in his somnolent state, and this operation upon the flies made him sneeze; this circumstance was also the cause of his suddenly awaking.

On casting a glance around the room, he now observed, that all the paintings did not represent birds as he thought on the previous evening; among them was a portrait of Prince Paskievitch, and another oil-painting representing an old

man, in a military frock-coat with red sleeves; a costume as worn during the reign of the late eccentric Emperor, Paul the First. The clock began again its unpleasant serpentine clatter and struck ten broken kettle strokes; a woman's face peeped through the half-opened door, but withdrew immediately, for it seemed that Tchichikoff had thrown off his blankets during the night, in the hope of sleeping better no doubt. It seemed to him as if the head that had been just peeping into the room was familiar to him. He began to collect his thoughts; on asking himself the question, who it might have been, at last he recollected that it must have been the old lady and proprietress of the house. He put on his shirt, his clothes were already dried and cleaned, and were lying close to his bed. When he was dressed, he stepped before the looking-glass and sneezed again so loudly, that a turkey-cock, which was just then passing under his window, which was very low, on the ground-floor, began to roll his voice like a drummer, as is customary among these original birds, no doubt wishing Tchichikoff a good morning in his own fashion, upon which the poor animal was called a fool by our hero.

This salutation, however, brought Tchchikoff close to the window, and he began to examine the scene before him. The window opened to all appearance upon nothing else but a poultry-yard; at least, what he beheld before his sight was a narrow court, filled with a numerous variety of domestic birds. Turkey-cocks and fowls seemed numberless; in the midst of them a common house-cock was walking proudly up and down with measured steps, shaking his comb fiercely and leaning his head on one side, as if he was listening to something, a pig and her offspring also made themselves conspicuous; they were all digging with their snouts in a heap of cinders, meanwhile, the mother caught hold of a young chicken and ate it up quite accidentally whilst grunting with a degree of satisfaction at the tender morsel; then she continued to dig on again as before, and as if nothing at all unusual had happened.

This narrow court or poultry-yard, was separated by a wooden wall, beyond which extended some large fields, where cabbage, onions, potatoes, carrots, and many other household vegetables were growing in great abundance. In



the midst of this orchard and in a great confusion, grew scattered here and there some apple, cherry, plum, and other fruit trees and shrubs, all covered over with nets, to protect them from the depredations of sparrows and other birds. There was a swarm of the former flying about from one spot to another. To keep these daring enemies of the orchard more effectually from plundering the fruit trees and vegetables, there were several guys in different places with outstretched arms; upon the head of one of them and in order to make him the more frightful-looking, a nightcap of the old lady had been placed.

Beyond the orchard, were several corn-fields, flanked by the huts of her ladyship's peasants, which, although built irregularly, and not in straight lines or streets, seemed, nevertheless, to confirm Tchichikoff's opinion that the old lady was rather comfortably circumstanced, because they were kept in good repair. The usual straw roofs appeared all to have been recovered with fresh materials; the gates and doors had their hinges in good repair, and such of the stables and stalls which were open to his

inspection, showed some new and well-made carts and sledges. In some of them he could count two and even three of each description.

“ Well, I am sure, who would have thought that the village is not so unimportant as one would believe it at first sight,” murmured Tchichikoff to himself, and thereupon he made up his mind to have a conversation with the old lady, and try to make a better acquaintance with her upon his all-engrossing subject.

## CHAPTER XV.

OUR hero now, in his turn, peeped through an aperture of the door through which the old lady had popped her head a quarter of an hour before, and perceiving her sitting before a small tea table, he entered the room in a cheerful and flattering manner.

“Good morning, my dear Sir ; how have you passed the night ?” said the old lady whilst slightly rising from her seat. She was better dressed than on the previous night ; she wore a black silk dress, and no longer had the nightcap on her head, but still there was something twisted round her neck.

“Very well, very well indeed,” answered

Tchichikoff, seating himself in an arm-chair.

"And how did you sleep, my dear Madam?"

"Not at all, my good Sir."

"And pray, what was the reason?"

"Indeed, I passed a sleepless night. My back and spine cause me great pain, and my foot all above the ankle, the higher up the leg, the more I suffer."

"It will pass over, I am sure it will, my dear good lady. Do not take so much notice."

"I pray to God, it would pass over. I continually use some bears' grease, as well as friction, with turpentine. But allow me to ask you, what would you like to take with your tea? I have some very good cherry-brandy in this small decanter."

"That will be very nice, my good lady, for I am very fond of cherry-brandy."

My intelligent reader will already have observed, that Tchichikoff, though polite, spoke nevertheless, with a rather civil familiarity, when compared to his manners at Maniloff's house, in fact he stood on no ceremony with the old lady, and made himself comfortable. Here I might also be allowed to make the observation,

that we other Russians, though we might not, and cannot in many things rival our more western friends, yet in what *we* term the good manners and behaviour, we have outdone by far the most civilized nations. It is quite impossible to enumerate all the numerous shades and *finesses* of our good manners. An Englishman or a Frenchman can impossibly form an idea or understand all the peculiarities and differences in our Russian conduct. Englishmen or Frenchmen will speak with pretty nearly the same tone of voice and courtesy to a *millionaire* as they would employ to a green-grocer, though within themselves they would or might give a decided preference to the former.

But with us it is not so. We can boast of many clever persons who would speak quite differently to a landed proprietor possessing two hundred serfs than to one who owns three hundred peasants; and with him who owns three hundred they would again not talk in the same tone of voice as with the owner of five hundred; and with the proprietor who owns five hundred again not so as with the owner of eight hundred; in a word, you may increase

by degrees the ownership to a million, and you may yet depend upon still meeting with shades of differences in their tone of voice as well as manners.

Let us suppose for a moment that we enter one of the numerous imperial offices established for the administration of law and justice in any of the more important towns of the Empire, and that such an imperial office is presided over by a person called the Manager of the Chancellerie. I would beg my courteous reader to muster courage and look at that person at the moment when he is sitting in his place surrounded by all his inferiors ; you will be assailed by something more than respect or fear, nay, I venture to say that you will be incapable of pronouncing a syllable ; for what pride or dignity does not his face express ? You could not do better than take up a brush and paint a Prometheus—a real Prometheus ! His glance is like that of an eagle ! his walk is easy and regular. And that very same proud eagle, as soon as he leaves that same seat of his greatness to approach the cabinet of *his* superior, becomes as alert as a long-legged snipe, and hurries with

his documents under his arm as if he was pursued by a hawk.

In society, and especially at evening parties, though Prometheus is not of an exalted rank, yet he remains the same proud and conceited man ; but as soon as he happens to meet with some one higher in dignity, such a metamorphosis takes place with our Prometheus, that even Ovid would have had the greatest difficulty in describing him properly. He has become a fly—no, even less than a fly—he has reduced himself to a grain of sand !

But this is not my friend Ivan Petrovitch, you would say in looking at him. Ivan Petrovitch is taller, and this is a little, sickly-looking person ; the other speaks in a loud bass voice, and is never wont to smile, but this person warbles like a bird, and laughs continually. And yet, if you go near and examine him closer, you will find it is your friend Ivan Petrovitch. Aha ! oho ! will be your exclamation. However it is time for us to return again to our *dramatis personæ*.

Tchichikoff, as we have already perceived, had come to the resolution of standing on no ceremony with the old lady, and, therefore,

took up a cup of tea, poured some of the cherry-brandy into it, and began the following conversation with his hostess :

"You have a fine estate and village, my good lady. Pray, how many serfs do you possess?"

"Well, my dear Sir, I have about eighty souls living in yonder village," the matron answered ; "but oh, misery ! the times are bad, and besides, I had a bad harvest last year ; may the Lord have mercy upon us !"

"However, to judge from appearances, your peasants look healthy, and their huts are in good repair. But allow me to inquire your name ? Pardon me, I am so very absent—I arrived so very late at night—"

"My name is Korobotchka, I am the widow of the late Secretary of the Manor."

"I am very much obliged to you for the information. And pray, what are your Christian names?"

"Anastasia Petrovna, if you please."

"Anastasia Petrovna ? a very fine name that of Anastasia Petrovna. I have an aunt, a



sister of my mother's, whose name is also Anastasia Petrovna."

"And pray, what is your name?" inquired the widow of the late Secretary. "You are, no doubt, as far as I can guess, one of our district judges?"

"No, my good lady," replied Tchichikoff, smiling. "You have not guessed rightly, for I am not a judge, but I travel for my own little affairs."

"Ah! then you must be a public contractor. How very much I regret now that I sold my honey so cheap to those merchants; I am sure, my good Sir, you would have bought the honey of me."

"Pardon me, but I think I should not have bought your honey."

"What else? Perhaps some flax? But alas! I have very little at the present moment, perhaps not more than half a pud."

"No, my good lady, but I might buy perhaps some other kind of goods; tell me, if you please, have many of your peasants died lately?"

"Oh, my dear Sir, I lost eighteen men!" said the matron, with a deep sigh. "And it

was a severe loss to me, for those who died were such healthy and hard-working peasants. It is true, since they died others again have been born; but what good are they as yet? they are all too young. I had but recently a visit from the judge, who came to claim the imperial capitation tax. Those eighteen are dead, and yet I have to pay the tax upon them all the same till the next census is taken. Last week a fire destroyed my smith, and that is again a severe loss, he was such an ingenious artisan, for he could even do locksmith's work."

"So you have suffered from a fire? this is sad indeed, my good lady."

"May God preserve me from such a calamity! for a real fire would be worse still; the smith burned himself to death, my good Sir. Somehow, a fire took place within his own body; he had been drinking too much, for a blue flame seemed to consume him, he smouldered, and became as black as a coal; but you can have no idea what an ingenious workman he was; and now I shall not be able to drive out at all, for I have no one to shoe my horses."

"All calamities are the decrees of Providence, my dear lady," said Tchichikoff, with a sigh; "the wisdom of God is beyond our understanding. You had better let me have them, my excellent Anastasia Petrovna?"

"Whom, my dear Sir?"

"Well, all those that are dead."

"But how am I to let you have them?"

"My good lady, that is quite simple. Or, if you like it better, sell them to me. I am even willing to pay you some money for them."

"But how is this? I really cannot understand you. Could you really intend to dig them up again out of their graves?"

Tchichikoff now perceived that the matron had gone too far, and that it became necessary to explain to her in what his proposal and business were to consist. In a few words, he made her understand, that the transfer, or sale, would only exist upon paper, and that her dead serfs would be noted down in that document as existing, or, more properly speaking, living.

"But pray, what do you want them for?" said the old lady, in opening her eyes as wide as surprise would allow it.

"That is my business," replied Tchichikoff, drily.

"But they are positively dead, my good Sir!"

"And who says that they are living? Your loss consists in their being dead; you have still to pay the capitation tax for them as regularly as before, is it not so? Very well, then; I am ready to deliver you from all further trouble and payment on their account. Do you comprehend me now? I offer, not only to take them off your hands, but I am even willing to pay you the amount of fifteen roubles. Now, I hope the matter will be clear to you?"

"Really, I don't know," the old lady said, hesitatingly. "Because, I never in my life sold any dead serfs before."

"What next, pray! This would be rather a wonder if you had sold any to anybody before. Or do you imagine, perhaps, that there is really any advantage to be derived from dead serfs?"

"No, that I do not believe. Of what use would they be? certainly of none whatever. The only thing that embarrasses me is, that they are really dead."

"Well, I am sure, this old woman seems to be of an obstinate disposition," thought Tchichikoff. "Listen, my excellent lady. Pray, reflect upon it seriously ; you are ruining yourself. You have to pay a tax for them as if they were positively living."

"Oh, pray, my good Sir, do not mention it, even!" interrupted the widow. "Only last week I took more than one hundred and fifty roubles to the office of the Receiver-General. And I had to bribe the judge besides."

"There, then, don't you see it, my dear, good lady. Now, I beg you will take into consideration and imagine that you will have no more occasion to bribe either of the tax-gatherers, because I shall undertake to pay for them ; I, not you ; I take all and every responsibility upon myself. I am even disposed to defray the expense of the necessary contract of sale ; do you understand that ?"

The old lady began to make her reflections. The proposed transaction seemed to her to be a profitable one, with the exception, however, that this was quite a novel and unheard-of business ; and for that reason she began to feel considerable apprehension lest this strange purchaser

might take some undue advantage of her. He arrived at her house without a formal introduction, and Heaven only knew whence he came; besides, he had made his appearance at so very late an hour of the night.

"Well, my good lady, does the offer suit you?" demanded Tchichikoff.

"Truly, my good Sir, but it has never happened to me to sell deceased people. I have been in the habit of selling some of my living serfs, and I remember now that I sold two pretty little girls, about three years ago, to our pope, and he has been exceedingly pleased with them ever since, for they have become very clever maids; they can weave napkins and towels now most beautifully."

"There is no question about the living between us, God bless them. I want your dead."

"Really, I am rather fearful at my first trial in such a business, lest I might suffer some severe loss in the transaction. Pardon my candour, but you might wish to impose upon me, my good Sir, and they—yes, they might be worth something more."

"Listen, good mother—how strange you are

to be sure! can you think them to be worth anything? Just oblige me by reflecting for a moment; they are nothing else but dust. Do you understand me? they are simply dust! Take for example the most trifling or the most worthless thing, suppose even a dirty rag, and yet you will find that rag worth something; that article will at least be bought at some paper-mills, whilst what I want of you cannot be made use of in any way; now then, pray tell me, of what use could they be to you?"

"My good Sir, you are right enough, they are of no value to me whatever, and the only reason that makes me hesitate, is that they are already dead."

"Oh, the blockhead of an old woman!" said Tchichikoff to himself, whilst beginning to lose, by degrees, his wonted patience and forbearance, "the devil may come to an understanding with her! I feel the perspiration already running down my back, thanks to the old she-dragon!" Whereupon he produced his pocket-handkerchief and began to dry his forehead, which was really covered with heavy drops of perspiration. However, Tchichikoff was wrong in getting into

a passion, for many another respectable and imperial person is as dull in the comprehension of business matters as Lady Korobotchka appeared to be, and may prove themselves and their heads as empty as a band-box; whenever they take to an opinion, they will stick to it with an obstinacy from which no argument, no proofs will ever dissuade them; though they may be as bright as noon-day, they continue to recoil from it, like an india-rubber ball will rebound when thrown against the wall.

After having wiped away the heavy dew-drops from his forehead, Tchichikoff determined to try if he could not bring her upon the right path by another way.

"My good lady," he said, "either you do not wish to understand me, or you speak thus for the sake of speaking. I offer you money—fifteen roubles in bank notes. Do you now understand me? This is a sum which you will not pick up in the open street. Oblige me, and tell me candidly, at what price did you sell your honey to those merchants?"

"At twelve roubles the pud."

"I fancy, my good lady, you are burthening



your conscience with a light sin ; you could not have sold it at twelve roubles the pud."

"My patron saint is my witness that I did so."

"Very well then, I believe you, but mark me now ! for that money you had to give your honey ; you perhaps spent a whole year in gathering it, and perhaps with much care, trouble, and anxiety too ; you have been watching your bee-hives during the summer and have been obliged to nurse them throughout our long winter months, whilst your dead serfs are neither goods nor chattles of this world. With them you had no cares, no troubles nor anxieties, and if they have left this wicked world for a better one, it was by a decree of Providence that you have sustained a loss in your household. Therefore, and as I have said before, there you received those twelve roubles for your troubles, whilst I am now offering you money for a mere nothing, and if you please not twelve roubles but fifteen, and not in silver, but in three beautiful new imperial bank notes."

## CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER such strong arguments as those with which we concluded the last chapter, Tchichikoff could not doubt any longer that the old lady would give way and consent to his proposal.

"Truly," replied the old matron, with an air of simplicity, "and considering that I am a poor and inexperienced widow, who have no regular insight into business matters, I think it will be better for me not to be in a hurry in this bargain; I shall wait a little time, some other purchaser may come, and, meanwhile I should be able to obtain some information about the prices."

"For shame, for shame, my good lady! It's

really a shame. What are you speaking now, pray consider? Who ever will come upon the idea of buying your dead serfs? What benefit could possibly be derived from them?"

"They might perhaps be turned to some account in a household—" replied the old woman, but did not finish her phrase, but looked him into the face as if frightened at the idea herself, and yet anxious to know what he would say in reply.

"Turn the dead to account in a household! Wherever have you heard of that before? Would you perhaps use them as guys in your orchards to frighten the sparrows away?"

"The holy powers be with us! What strange language you do use to be sure!" exclaimed the widow whilst crossing herself.

"Where else would you like to put them? however, I will leave you their skeletons as well as their graves; I only want you to transfer them to me on paper. Well then, what do you say? Will you agree? pray give me an answer at least!"

The old lady began to reflect again.

"What are you thinking about, Anastasia Petrovna?"

"I really do not know what to decide upon, you had better buy some flax of me."

"What am I to do with your flax? I am really surprised at you; I speak to you of quite a different matter, and you want to stuff me with flax! Everything in proper time, I will call at some other time, and then I shall have no objection to deal with you for your flax. Now, then, Anastasia Petrovna, how is it to be?"

"By my saints, the goods you want, are so very strange, so very unusual!"

Here Tchichikoff outstepped the bounds of patience, and rising from his chair, he upset it in his fury, and wished the old woman to the devil.

At the name of the devil, the old woman became unusually alarmed.

"Oh, pray do not mention him! the Lord preserve us!" she exclaimed, whilst trembling violently with a pale face. "It is only three nights ago since I dreamt of the evil one all night long. I happened to come upon the idea of wishing to tell my own fortune by a pack of cards, just shortly after I had said my evening prayers, and it seems that the Lord

has sent him out against me to punish me for my wickedness. Oh, he was so frightfully ugly; and his horns seemed by far larger than those of my oxen."

"I am only surprised that you don't dream of them by scores. Prompted by a feeling of christian humanity, I intended, on seeing a poor and lonely widow striving against difficulties—no, I will not do it now, and may what will become of you and of your whole village!"

"Oh, how you do swear, to be sure!" said the widow, whilst looking terrified.

"But it is quite impossible to keep my temper with you. Without wishing to give you offence, I cannot help quoting an old proverb, and compare you to a farm-yard animal,—the species of which, out of respect for you, I will forbear mentioning—lying on a hay-stack, not eating itself, and preventing others from doing so. I should have liked to purchase even some of your household produce, because I am in the habit of contracting also for imperial supplies."

In saying this he slightly imposed upon the old lady; however, it seemed to slip quite acci-

dentally from his tongue, without any premeditation ; it served, however, to further his views, quite unexpectedly. Contractors for the supply of the imperial army, the sense which these words conveyed, had a very strong effect upon the nervous system of Anastasia Petrovna, at least, it made her articulate the following words in almost a nearly supplicating voice :

“ But, my good Sir, what is the cause of your great anger and impatience ? If I had known beforehand that you were a gentleman of such a hot temper, I would, of course, not have given you the slightest provocation.”

“ I too have a reason to be angry with you ? Bah, you are mistaken, the thing is not worth an egg-shell, and wherefore should I lose my good temper ?”

“ Very well, then, my good Sir, I am ready to let you have them for fifteen roubles, in bank notes ; but pray remember me in your contracts of supply ; if you should want to purchase some rye-flour, oatmeal, or some wheat, and some cattle, then please do not forget to treat me as a friend.”

“ I shall not take any advantage over you, my worthy woman,” said Tchichikoff ; mean-

while he used his hand to wipe away the perspiration from his forehead, which was running down his face in three large streams. He inquired of her, if she had perchance, an agent in town, or a friend whom she could intrust with the signature of the contract of sale in her name, and any other authorization that might be deemed necessary in the completion of the document.

"To be sure I have, the proto-pope's father, Kirilla's son, serves in the very government office in which you will have to sign the papers," answered the widow. Tchichikoff asked her to address him a letter of authorization, and in order to avoid her any further trouble, offered to compose and write it out for her.

"It would be a good thing," thought Lady Korobotchka, "if he would contract for some of my grains and cattle, I must try to please him now: let me see? yes, there is some of yesterday's paste still left. I'll go and tell Fetinia to make him some pancakes; it would be also a good idea to bake him a sweet cake stuffed with eggs, I know they bake it well in my house, and besides it will take but little time and trouble."

The good old lady left the room with the intention of carrying out her hospitable projects about the sweet egg cakes, to which no doubt she meant to make the addition of a few more of the eatables that are generally stored up in the household of Russian families living in the country. Tchichikoff made use of this opportunity, and entered the reception-room in which he had passed the night, with the intention of taking the necessary writing materials from his dressing-case. The reception-room was already swept, and in good order, the luxurious feather-bed had been removed, a table was placed before the sofa, and covered with a white cloth. After depositing his dressing-case upon the table, Tchichikoff sat down to rest himself a little, because he felt himself as wet from perspiration as if he had been plunged into the river; every article of his dress, beginning from the shirt down to his stockings, was ringing wet.

“Ough! how mercilessly the old tiger cat has treated me to be sure!” said he, after taking breath again, and opening his dressing-case.

The author is of opinion, that there are a great many readers, who are sufficiently in-



quisitive to wish to know something more about the construction of the inner compartments of this dressing-case, made in the French style by some Russian mechanic. If we are right, why should we not gratify them? Here then is the interior arrangements: in the centre, you may imagine you behold the shaving apparatus, such as brushes and soap box, next to them, six or seven partitions for razors; then on either side, a square opening for ink and sand-stands, with a hollow or curved shelf for pens, pencils, sealing wax, and all such things of longitude; then again a few more partitions, with and without covers, for such articles as are of a shorter kind, and they were filled with visiting cards, invitations to christenings and funerals, playbills, and a variety of other small articles, which he secured to keep as souvenirs. All this upper division, with its various compartments could be taken out, and you would have seen a space occupied by heaps of writing paper of all sizes, then followed a small but hidden box of money, which was opened by a secret spring fixed in the side of the case. He always had the habit of opening this money-safe so hurriedly, that it was quite impossible to see how much money he carried

about with him when travelling. After having produced the necessary material, Tchichikoff arranged his pen and began to write. At that moment Lady Korobotchka entered the room.

"What a pretty dressing-case you have, my good Sir," said the widow to him, whilst sitting down close to him. "No doubt you bought that pretty box in Moscow?"

"Yes, my lady, in Moscow," answered Tchichikoff, continuing to write.

"Thought as much; for everything is well made there. About three years ago, my sister bought some warm shoes for her children, and they were so well made, that they have lasted them even till now; the material is excellent in Moscow! Oh, ye saints, what a collection of stamped papers you have there!" she continued, whilst casting a look into his dressing-case.

And she was right, he had a large quantity of stamped paper.

"I wish you would make me a present, if but of a sheet! I am quite out of it for the present; it might happen that I shall have to write a petition, and have no suitable paper."

Tchichikoff explained to her that the paper

was not of that description, that it could only be used for the purpose of drawing up contracts of sale, but not petitions. However, in order to quiet as well as to please her, he presented her with an old sheet of trifling value.

When he had written the letter he requested her to sign it, and demanded at the same time a list of the names of those of her dead serfs, as he was shortly about to consider as his property. It appeared, however, that Lady Korobotchka was not in the habit of keeping any accounts or lists, but could remember the name of everyone by heart; Tchichikoff was, therefore, obliged to note them down as she dictated their names in due rotation.

The names of a few of his future dependants did puzzle him considerably, but much more so their surnames, which seemed to have been given to them by their lawful mistress as distinguishing marks of their various professions. After having taken down their names with the different items, Tchichikoff stopped to take breath, and inhaled a savoury perfume, like that of melted butter.

“Will you please to come and take a little luncheon now?” said his amiable hostess.

Tchichikoff looked round, and saw the table covered with a variety of good things, such as mushrooms, fish, pies, muffins, pancakes, to which there was a variety of sweet and fat sauces, sauces mixed with sweet onions, sauces mixed with poppy-seed, cream and butter sauces, sprat and other small fish sauces.

"Pray taste this pie with egg and meat stuffing, first," said Lady Korobotchka.

Tchichikoff seated himself at once to the strongly-recommended pie with egg and meat stuffing, and after having eaten nearly the half of it, he began to praise it very much. And indeed, the pie was really very excellently prepared, and considering the bother he had to come to an understanding with the old lady, it seemed particularly delicious.

"And now some pancakes or muffins, if you please?" said she again.

In reply to this, Tchichikoff rolled up three pancakes at once, and after dipping them in the melted butter, he dispatched them into his mouth, and wiped his greasy lips and hands upon the clean napkin. After repeating this operation twice or three times, he begged his

hostess to order his horses to be put to his britchka. Anastasia Petrovna immediately called her servant Fetinia, gave her the necessary instructions, and ordered her at the same time to bring a fresh supply of hot pancakes.

"Your pancakes are delicious, indeed," said Tchichikoff, whilst helping himself freely to some more of the hot ones that were put before him.

"Yes, they bake them well at my house," replied his hostess; "it is only a pity that we have such bad harvests, which makes the flour so very dear. But why do you hurry yourself so much, my dear Sir?" she said to Tchichikoff, when she saw him take up his travelling-cap, "your carriage cannot yet be ready and waiting?"

"That will soon be done, my good lady. I keep my coachman always alive to his duty."

"Well, then, pray do not forget me in your contracts for the imperial supplies."

"I shall not forget you, my excellent lady, I shall not forget you," repeated Tchichikoff, whilst walking out of the house.

"Do you by chance buy pig's grease?" inquired the widow, whilst following him from behind.

"Why should I not buy some? of course I do, but that will be at some other time."

"I shall have some pig's grease to offer to you at Christmas."

"I will buy some of you, I will, indeed, I am ready to buy anything of you later, even pig's grease."

"You may, perhaps, also like to buy some birds' feathers of all descriptions of me. I shall have a quantity at Michaelmas next."

"Very well, very well, my good lady," answered Tchichikoff.

"There, you see, my good Sir, your britchka is not yet ready," said his hostess, when they had arrived upon the door-step.

"Oh, never mind, it will soon be ready. Pray tell me only how we shall have to drive to come upon the high road?"

"How should I explain that to you? Let me see," said the old lady after a moment's reflection; "it is rather difficult to describe because there are so many turnings; perhaps I had better give you a little girl to show you

the road. I dare say you will have a small seat for her to sit upon on your carriage?"

"Yes, to be sure I have."

"Very well, then, I will intrust you with one of my little girls; she knows the road well enough, but look you here! do not decoy her, for some of the merchants have already carried one of my girls off."

Tchichikoff promised her that he would not kidnap the girl, and Lady Korobotchka, tranquillized by his assurance, began now to look around her in the court-yard of the house; she fixed her eyes, first upon the housekeeper, who was carrying across the court a large vessel with honey, and then upon a peasant who made his appearance at the gates, and by degrees the old lady was soon completely devoted to her household concerns.

"Ah, here is my britchka at last," exclaimed Tchichikoff, as he saw his carriage driving up. "Well, you idiot, what the deuce has kept you so long? It seems the fumes of yesterday have not yet quite evaporated."

Selifan made no reply to this observation.

"Farewell, my excellent lady! But stop, where is your little girl?"

"Come here, Pelagey," said the widow addressing herself to a little girl of about eleven years, who was standing close by, dressed in a home-woven woollen frock, and with bare feet, which, at a distance might have been mistaken for boots, so much they were besmeared with fresh mud. "Go with this gentleman, and lead him upon the high road."

Selifan assisted her to get upon his seat, in doing this she put one of her dirty feet upon the carriage steps, and after leaving a mark behind, she at last took her seat next to Selifan. After he had seen her safely seated, Tchichikoff in his turn put his foot upon his carriage steps, and after making it visibly incline on the right hand side—because he was rather weighty—he at last took his seat comfortably, and said: "Oh! now I am all right! farewell, my good lady!"

The horses moved on, and the carriage left the court-yard. Selifan was sulky during the whole journey, but at the same time very careful and attentive in the observance of his duty as a driver, which always happened when he had been negligent or drunk. His horses were exceeding clean, as well as their harness and



the britchka. The horse collar of one of the three horses, which was usually put on its neck in so dilapidated a state, that the hemp was visible under the leather, was now cleverly sewn up. During the whole time he continued to be speechless, and now and then only lifted his whip, but without addressing any lecture to his tiger-spotted idler, who stood as much as ever in want of a correction; however, the usually talkative driver, held his reins loosely in his hand, and used the whip only occasionally, and then only passed it across their backs as a matter of form. Yet from his sulkily-compressed lips were heard at intervals monosyllables of an ill-tempered meaning, such as, "Now then, now, you raven! take care! speed on!" but nothing else.

Even the other side horse, as well as the leader seemed to feel some discontent, when they heard nothing of that to which they had been accustomed: either words of reproof or approbation. The tiger-spotted idler seemed rather disgusted, because he felt the most unpleasant touches tickling his fat sides.

"Now then, now then, what the deuce is the matter with him! he is harder at me than

ever ! "thought the idler to himself, whilst pointing his ears. "He knows where to hit, and no mistake ! He won't beat me in a straight-forward manner upon the back, but picks and chooses the most sensible parts, he hits my ears, and keeps annoying my flanks."

"Is it to the right?" was the dry question which Selifan addressed to the little girl sitting next to him, whilst pointing with his whip towards a dark road, looming in the distance among some verdoyant corn fields.

"No, no, I will show you where," answered the little girl.

"Where is it?" demanded Selifan, after having driven for some distance.

"That is the road," replied the child, whilst pointing with her hand.

"Eh, you little stupid !" said Selifan ; "that is to the right ; she does not even know what right and left means."

Although the day was fair, the road was wet and heavy, and so muddy, that the wheels of the britchka were soon thickly covered with it, which considerably increased the weight of the carriage ; besides, the soil was of a clayish nature and exceedingly sticky. This was the

chief cause that they could not reach the high road before mid-day. Without the assistance of the little girl, they would not have been able to progress so fast, because the narrow paths and turnings were innumerable, and led in all directions, like captured lobsters when thrown out of a bag, and Selifan, if alone, might have driven heaven knows where. Soon after, the little girl pointed to some building at a distance and said, "There is the high road!"

"And what are those buildings?" inquired Selifan.

"That is an inn," answered the child.

"Now we shall be able to find the road ourselves," said Selifan, "you can be off home again."

He stopped his horses, and helped her to get down from his seat, murmuring through his teeth, "Eh, you little black-leg!"

Tchichikoff gave her some coppers, the value of about a penny, and she soon disappeared in one of the next turnings. The poor little child seemed overjoyed, not so much about the trifle which she had received, as from the pleasure she had enjoyed in sitting and riding in such a beautiful carriage, drawn by such handsome horses.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ON arriving at the inn, Tchichikoff ordered his coachman to halt, mainly for too reasons; on the one hand, he wished that his jaded horses should have a little rest, and on the other, that he himself should have something to eat, and recruit his exhausted strength.

The author must confess that he very much envies the appetite and the stomach of such men as his hero. He entertains the greatest indifference for all those gentlemen of the *haut ton*, who inhabit either St. Petersburg or Moscow, and who waste their time in anxiously thinking about what they would like to eat to-morrow, and what dinner they could imagine

for the day after, and preparing themselves for that dinner by undergoing the operation of swallowing a pill on the evening previous ; who gulp down oysters and devour lobsters, together with a variety of other marine and land curiosities, and end by going on a journey for health, either to Baden Baden, or the Caucasus.

No, these gentlemen have never had the good fortune to excite my envy ; but our men of the middle rank, who at one inn ask for cold ham, at another for roast pork, and at a third for a tail, or a head of a sturgeon, or a lump of smoked sausage with onions in it, and then, without any further ceremony, at any hour of the day sit down to table and eat and drink heartily, such men indeed enjoy the enviable blessings of heaven, a sound stomach and a good appetite. I remember many a gentleman belonging to, what we term in Russia, the *haut ton*, who would have gladly parted with the half of his numerous serfs, and the half of his mortgaged and non-mortgaged fortune, with all its foreign and domestic improvements, on one condition, namely : that he should receive in return, such a stomach and appetite as the gentlemen of the middle rank possesses ; but what a pity that no

monetary sacrifices, nor the gift of their estates with or without foreign improvements will ever obtain them in return such a stomach as the gentleman of the less exalted position can boast of.

The inn which received Tchichikoff under its hospitable wooden roof, had an entrance verandah which rested upon four pillars, resembling some old-fashioned church chandeliers; the aspect of the whole, was a dark, smoky-looking structure, altogether, not unlike the miserable huts of the peasantry, only in larger dimensions; the fresh workmanship of the carved cornices which ornamented the windows, and the large entrance door, formed a striking contrast with the dark walls of the gloomy house, upon the shutters of which a variety of flower-pots were painted upon, what was once, a sky-blue ground.

After ascending a narrow, dark and inconvenient staircase, Tchichikoff arrived at a spacious landing, where he opened a creaking door, and was encountered by an enormously stout old woman dressed in a yellow and flame coloured print dress, who officiously addressed the stranger with: "step in here, if you please!" In this room his eye fell upon familiar objects,

such as are to be met with at every small country inn, of which there are again uncountable numbers on the high roads of Russia.

Among these familiar objects we may mention, an immense hooped samovar, smoothly plained fir walls, a three legged, but large cupboard, covered with an array of tea-pots, cups and saucers standing in a corner, neatly painted china easter eggs, hanging before the images of the saints suspended by pink and blue ribbons, a large favourite cat with her new born offspring, a looking glass, which instead of reflecting two eyes showed the curious party to be in possession of four, and instead of a face something not unlike a muffin, and finally numerous small bundles of fine herbs, which had been hung up to dry close by the lamps burning before the images. Any one on approaching these simples, and inhaling their perfumes could not have resisted a sneeze in consequence.

“ Have you a little bit of sucking pig ?” such was the question with which Tchichikoff addressed himself to the fat old woman.

“ I have some, your glory !” was the short reply.

“ With cream and horse-raddish ?”

“ Yes, your glory ! prepared with cream and horse-raddish.”

“ Let me have it then !”

The landlady hurried off, and soon returned again with a plate and a napkin so unmercifully stiffened, that it crackled like dried bark ; she produced a knife with a bone handle, which from age and use had become of a very dark yellow colour, its blade was as thin as a pen-knife, a fork with two prongs only, and lastly a salt box, which it was impossible for her to make stand upright upon the table.

Our hero, begun immediately, as was his habit, to enter into conversation with the hostess, and inquired with apparent solicitude, if she kept the hotel herself, or whether it was her husband who did so ; how large the income was, and whether her sons lived with her in the house ; whether the eldest was a single, or married man, and what sort of wife he had got . whether she brought a large, or a small marriage portion into the family ; and if the father-in-law was satisfied, or displeased that he received but trifling presents at the wedding, in a word, he omitted no question that could possibly have been put.



From these and similar inquiries, it will be obvious that he was also anxious to know what sort of landowners lived in her neighbourhood, and he was consequently informed that there existed in the vicinity a great variety of landed proprietors, for instance: the Blochins, the Potchitaeffs, the Milnoffs, Tchepprakoff, a Colonel in the army, Sobakevitch.

“ Ah ! you know Mr. Sobakevitch ? ” Tchi-chikoff demanded, interrupting her, and he was informed that the old woman knew, not only Sobakevitch, but also Mr. Maniloff, and that Maniloff was, in her opinion, more of a gentleman than Sobakevitch ; that the former, when putting up at her inn, would always order a roast chicken, or demand some cold veal ; and if she had any sheep’s liver, he would even ask for that, and yet scarcely touch anything ; whilst Sobakevitch was accustomed to ask for only one dish, but sit down to it, and eat it all, and even ask an addition of the same, and for the same price.

When he had thus questioned and conversed with the old landlady, whilst continuing to eat his sucking pig, of which there remained but

one small piece more, the noise of carriage wheels arriving at the inn was heard. He rose and looked out of the window, and beheld a light britchka drawn by a troika, three beautiful and well-fed horses, pulled up before the inn.

Two gentlemen alighted from this carriage. The one was fair and of high stature ; the other less tall and of dark complexion. The fair man was dressed in a dark cloth paletot ; the other wore a simple Turkish morning coat, commonly called an archaluck. At a distance, a second miserable looking empty vehicle, drawn by four long-haired and poor looking horses, followed the first, the harness was in a wretched condition, and the horses' collars were tattered, and tied up with strings.

The fair complexioned gentleman immediately entered the house and walked up-stairs ; whilst his darker companion remained below, seeking for something in his britchka, and speaking to the servant. At the same time he made signs with his hand to the driver of the other vehicle, which was now gradually approaching. The voice of the speaker below seemed familiar to Tchichikoff, and whilst he was trying to recog-

nise him, the fair man had had already time to find the door, and entered the room.

He was a man of tall stature, with careworn or rather jaded features, and wore a pair of small Scotch-coloured moustachios. From his pallid complexion it could easily be perceived that if he had not smelled much gunpowder, he must have been perfectly familiar with the smoke of tobacco. He bowed civilly to Tchichikoff, which the other returned as civilly. In the course of a few minutes they would have infallibly spoken, and have become well acquainted one with other, because the commencement was already made, and they would have expressed at the same time, with mutual satisfaction, that the dust on the high road had been completely laid by the heavy rain of the preceding night, and that it was now cool and pleasant travelling, but at that moment the dark-complexioned traveller entered the room, threw his cap upon the table, and passed his hand through his rich black hair.

He was a man of the middle stature, well made, and of gentlemanly appearance, with a highly healthy-coloured complexion, with teeth as white as snow, and a pair of whiskers as

black as ebony. He was fresh as milk and blood can possibly be; health seemed to gleam out of every one of his features.

"Bah! bah! bah!" he exclaimed suddenly, and opening his arms as he beheld Tchichikoff, "What good fortune."

Tchichikoff recognized in the speaker, Mr. Nosedrieff, the same gentleman with whom he had the pleasure of dining at the Procurator's house, and who in a very brief time indeed had placed himself on such a familiar footing with our hero, that he had called him several times *thou*, which is, by the bye, not unusual in Russia, though it would shock the ear of an Englishman. However, Tchichikoff on his side, had given no provocation to this familiarity.

"Where have you been?" said Nosedrieff; but without awaiting a reply, he continued: "My dear fellow, I have just returned from a fair. Congratulate me! I have nearly ruined myself by gambling. Would you believe it, I never lost so much in my life before? And the result is, that I have been obliged to travel with common post-horses. Just look through the window, and convince yourself, my dear fellow!"

Here he with his hand turned Tchichikoff's

head towards the window, and nearly made him hit himself against the framework.

"Do you see what miserable looking wretches they are? I can assure you they had every difficulty in dragging themselves along the road, and I was therefore obliged to get into that fellow's britchka.

With this polite remark, he pointed with his finger towards his travelling companion.

"Are you not yet acquainted? My brother-in-law, Mr. Muschnieff. I have been speaking to him of you, my dear Tchichikoff all the morning. I told him, mind, we are sure to meet that delightful gentleman, Pavel Ivanovitch. But, my dear fellow, if you could only imagine how much I have lost by gambling! Would you believe it, I lost not only four of my finest race-horses, but also a considerable amount in bank-notes—all gone! Now I have neither my watch nor chain."

Tchichikoff looked at him, and really found it was as he said, he had neither his watch nor his chain. It even seemed to him as if one of his whiskers was less full than the other.

"And if I had had but twenty roubles more in my pocket at the time," continued Nosedrieff,

"but the trifling sum of a twenty-rouble note, I should have won back again, all, no, not merely all, but I am sure, that at this moment I should have had thirty or forty thousand roubles more in my pocket-book, this I can affirm, upon my word, as a gentleman!"

"Now then, softly, you said the same then and there," said the fair man, "and when I gave you a fifty-rouble note, you lost it in no time."

"I should not have lost it; by Heaven, I should not have lost it, without a mistake of my own, I could not have lost it. If I had only doubled my stake after the parole, I should have ruined the croupier."

"However, you did nothing of the kind," added his brother-in-law.

"Certainly not, because as I told you, I bent my corners too rashly. And you think, perhaps, that the major plays well?"

"I don't care how he plays, but the fact is, that he has won your money."

"Never mind with his infernal good luck, I could play as well. But let him come and try his chance with me at any other game, and you will soon be able to see how I shall treat him. I must confess this fair was one of the finest I

have been at for some time. The tradesmen themselves agree that they never saw so many people in their town, and that seldom have they known such a run of business.

"All that I sent to the market, from my estate, has been sold at the most advantageous prices. I sincerely regret, that you, my dear fellow, were not with us. Imagine only, about three wersts from town, a regiment of dragoons was lying in their barracks. All the officers of that regiment and a few more from other places, in all, about forty men besides myself; we were always together, but when we sat down to drink—then it was, my dear fellow, that I should have liked to see you among us.

"What a nice fellow that Stabs-capitän Pozelueff is!" Nosedrieff ran on. "We were always together. We had some excellent wine supplied to us by the celebrated merchant Ponomareff! But, by the bye, I must tell you, he is a great scoundrel, and you ought not to buy anything in his shop; he has the habit of mixing with his wines, heaven knows what stuff, he put in some sandal-wood, bad spirits, and even some of that raw Kahetian wine of the Caucasus, the rascal! but then I must confess,

whenever he produces a bottle of what he calls extra fine, and which he usually keeps in a secret place, then you may depend on tasting something palatable, and fancy yourself in paradise. The champagne we had at his house was so delicious, that that with which the Lord Lieutenant treated us the other day, was as bad as a bottle of stale ginger-beer compared with it. Only fancy, it was not Cliquot. He also produced from his usual hiding store an extra bottle of claret, which he called bonbon. Its flavour was that of a rose, or a whole bouquet if you like. Oh, we had such a spree with that fellow ! and a prince, who happened to arrive after us demanded some champagne, and could not get any in the whole town, for we, I mean the officers and I, had drunk every bottle of it. Would you believe it, my dear fellow, that I for my own account drank seventeen bottles of champagne during our dinner !

“ Now then, I am sure you could not have drunk seventeen bottles all by yourself,” his brother-in-law interrupted him.

“ On the faith of a gentleman, I did as I said, I drank them all,” answered Nodrieff.



"You may say what you like, but I tell you, that you could not even empty ten bottles of champagne."

"Very well then, will you lay a wager to that effect?"

"Why should I bet with you about it?"

"Now then, come, stake your new rifle, which you bought at the fair."

"No, I won't."

"Just lay me a wager about it!"

"I won't even try."

"It's well you won't try, else you would remain without your rifle as you now are without your cap. Oh, my dear fellow Tchichikoff, you can have no idea how much I regret that you were not with us! I know you could never have parted with my friend Lieutenant Kuvschinikoff, I am sure you would have soon become intimate. He is not such a man as our Procurator, or all the other niggards of our province, who tremble at each copek they spend. That fellow spends his fortune like a prince, and is ready to play any game. Ah, my dear Tchichikoff, why did you not come to the fair. Really you are a humbug! pardon my saying it, but I could not

help it, allow me to embrace you, my dear fellow, because I like you amazingly !" and he embraced Tchichikoff, only to go on as follows.

" Muschnieff, my dear fellow, just look at us, here we are both, Providence brought us together ; what is he to me and what am I to him ? But my dear fellow, you have no idea, how many carriages there were at every evening party, all *en gros*. I joined a lottery and won two pots of pomatum, a china tea-cup and saucer, and a guitar ; but I played later again and lost all, and six silver roubles besides.

" Yes, my dear fellow, we have been at some of the most delicious evening parties. I also made some purchases at the fair, fortunately I did so, whilst I had yet some money in my pockets. But by the bye, where are you driving to ?"

" I am on the road to a gentleman's house in the neighbourhood," answered Tchichikoff.

" Cut him, my dear fellow ! and come with me !"

" Thank you, but I cannot accept your invitation, I have some business."

" Bah, what business can you have ! you only

pretend that, oh, you sly old father Opodildoc Ivanovitch !”

“ Really, I have some business to attend to of a very important nature too.”

“ I lay a wager, you are telling me a fib ! now tell me at least where are you going to ?”

“ I have no objection to tell you that I am going to visit Sobakevitch.”

Here Nosedrieff burst into a fit of laughter, with such a ringing voice as a man of perfect health only can enjoy, and at the same time displayed a range of teeth as white as sugar to the last ; his cheeks became flushed and trembling, and the effect of his loud outburst could have caused a neighbour in a third room, separated by two doors, to startle from his slumbers, and exclaim : “ What the deuce is the matter with that fellow ?”

“ What do you find so laughable in that,” demanded Tchichikoff, partly vexed at the loud outburst.

But Nosedrieff continued to laugh as loudly as before, adding : “ pray have mercy, or else I shall burst from laughing !”

“ There is nothing laughable in that, I should

think ; besides I gave him a promise that I would come and visit him," said Tchichikoff.

" But, my dear fellow, allow me to assure you that you will be disgusted with your own existence, if you go to see him, he is a regular Jew killer ! and I know your disposition ; you are too hasty in your judgment, if you hope to meet there any playmen, or a bottle of good bonbon claret. Listen, my dear fellow ! send Sobakevitch to the deuce, and come with me ! I promise to give you a famous treat ! I have some excellent wine from that scoundrel Ponomareff, who was immensely civil to me, and assured me that I should not be able to get any thing nearly so good as his claret and champagne, were I to search for it throughout the town and fair ; for all that I believe him to be a great rogue, and that he has taken me in most unmercifully. I told him as much, and added besides ; you and all the public contractors are, in my opinion, the greatest rogues on earth ! At all this, my dear fellow, he used to laugh whilst stroking his carrotty beard.

" But, my dear fellow, I nearly forgot to tell you ; I know now you will not be able to refuse me your admiration, I am going to show you

something, which I tell you beforehand, I won't part with, were you even to offer me ten thousand roubles on the spot.

"Halloa, Porphir," he shouted whilst approaching the window, and addressing his servant by this name, who was below, holding a knife and a crust of bread in one hand, and a piece of smoked sturgeon in the other, which piece he had contrived cleverly to cut off whilst fumbling about in his master's carriage.

"Halloa, Porphir," shouted Nosedrieff again, "bring me that little dog out of the carriage! You shall see, my dear fellow, what a beautiful dog that is," he said, while turning himself again towards Tchichikoff. "It is like a stolen dog, the owner would have rather liked to part with himself than with that dog. I gave him that wretched mare, which as you know, I took in exchange from Captain Hvostireff."

Tchichikoff, however, had never in his life known, or seen either the wretched mare, or the Captain Hvostireff.

"Would your glory like to take any thing?" asked the landlady civilly.

"Nothing. Oh, my dear fellow, what fun we had to be sure! However, old woman, let

me have a small glass of something. What have you got?"

"Some anisette, if your glory wishes."

"Very well, let me have some anisette," said Nosdrieff.

"Give me a small glass as well!" said his fair brother-in-law.

"At the theatre, I heard an actress sing like a canary-bird; the lieutenant who sat next to me whispered his favorite motto into my ear, and said: 'this young bird would be an excellent subject for a favourable opportunity!' I fancy there were at least fifty large booths upon the Market Place. And Fenardi spun a wind-mill, at least four hours at a time."

Here he took a small glass of liqueur from the hands of the landlady, who bowed very low at the moment.

"Ah, give him here!" he exclaimed, as he beheld Porphir entering the room with a small dog in his hands. Porphir was, as nearly as possible, dressed like his master, namely, he wore a similar Turkish morning coat, with the only difference, that it looked greasy.

"Bring him here—put him on the floor!"

Porphir deposited the little dog upon the floor, who stretched out his fore paws and began to smell the ground.

"Here is the dog," said Nosdrieff, laying hold of his skin and holding him up in his hand. The young dog howled forth a rather plaintive tune.

"But you have not done what I told you," said Nosdrieff, turning towards Porphir, whilst minutely examining the dog's stomach; "it seems you have neglected to clean him?"

"Pardon me, Sir, I have combed him."

"Where then do those fleas come from?"

"I can't say, your glory. They must have got upon him somehow whilst he was lying in the carriage."

"Nonsense, stuff, you idle fellow, you appear to have forgotten to do as I told you, and have given him some of your own jumpers besides. Look here, my dear Tchichikoff, just examine his ears, now just feel them with your own hand."

"Never mind, I can see without feeling: he is of a good breed," answered Tchichikoff.

"Nay, oblige me, only just feel his ears!"

Tchichikoff, in order to oblige him, complied with the request, and felt the ears of the young dog, and then added: "yes, it will be a fine dog."

"And his nose, can you feel how cold it is? just try it with your hand."

Tchichikoff not wishing to offend him, even felt the dog's nose, saying: "yes, he seems to have a fine scent."

"A thorough-bred bull-dog," continued Nodrieff, "and I must confess I longed to have a real English bull-dog, long ago. Here, Porphir, take him away again."

Porphir took the young bull-dog gently under the stomach, and carried it back again into the carriage.

"I say, Tchichikoff, you must now come as far as my house, it is only five wersts off, and we shall be there in no time, and later if you like you may proceed to Sobakevitch's."

"And why should I not," thought Tchichikoff to himself, "I'll really drive as far as Nodrieff's estate and see what it is like. He is not worse than anybody else; he is a good a gentleman as any, and besides, he is a gambler and has lost. To judge by appearances he



seems rather clever, consequently, it might easily happen that I shall easily obtain what I want."

"Very well then," he added aloud, "I will, but on the express condition that you will not detain me, because my time is precious."

"Ah, my soul, that is right! I am delighted my dear fellow, allow me to embrace you, to kiss you."

Hereupon Nosedrieff and Tchichikoff embraced and kissed one another on the cheek—as is the custom between intimate friends in Russia.

"And we shall all have a delightful journey home!"

"Pray, no, I hope you will excuse me," said his fair brother-in-law, "I must hasten homewards."

"Nonsense, stuff, my dear fellow, I shall not let you off."

"Really, I must, else my wife will be angry with me, and besides, now you will be able to take a seat in Mr. Tchichikoff's britchka."

"No, no, no, and don't you think of escaping us!"

Mushnieff, Nosedrieff's fair-complexioned bro-

ther-in-law, was one of those men whose dominant character seemed to be a spirit of contradiction. Scarcely has a person had time to open his mouth, when he will be already to contradict him, it is therefore obvious that they will never agree upon any point that is in just opposition to their different and separate opinion, they will therefore never call a foolish man a wise one, and especially such men would as a matter of course never consent to dance to another's whistle; but in the end, it will always appear that their general character is a weak disposition, and that at last they will agree upon the very thing they originally had been contradicting, namely, they will affirm the fool to be a wise man, and the next thing they will do, is to go and dance most heartily after another man's whistle, in a word, they begin roughly and end smoothly.

"Nonsense!" said Nosedrieff, in reply to some observation of his brother-in-law; he then took his travelling cap, put it on his head and the fair gentleman followed the two others.

"I hope you will excuse me, but your glories have not paid me for the liqueurs," said the old landlady.

"Ah, very well, my good woman. I say my dear brother-in-law, just pay that old woman will you. I have not a copek in my pocket," said Nosdrieff.

"How much is it?" demanded the brother-in-law.

"A rouble only, may it please your glory," said the hostess.

"Stuff! nonsense!" shouted Nosdrieff, "give her only half-a-rouble; that will be quite sufficient for the trash."

"It's rather little, your honour," said the old woman; however, she took the money with a curtsey, and hurried to open the door as fast as her bodily constitution would permit her. She had sustained no loss in taking what was given to her, because she took care to demand four times the value of her bad spirits.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE travellers took their seats in their respective carriages. Tchichikoff's britchka drove in a line with that in which Nosedrieff was seated with his brother-in-law, and thus they had every facility for continuing their conversation during their journey to Nosedrieff's estate. These two carriages were followed at a slight distance behind by Nosedrieff's dilapidated conveyance. In it were seated his servant Porfir, and his new acquisition the young bull-dog.

As the conversation of the three travellers could be but of little interest to the reader, we will omit it altogether, and say a word instead about Nosedrieff, whose fate it will perhaps be to play an important part in this narrative.

Nosdrieff's face we premise to be already a little familiar to our reader. Men like him could easily be met with by everybody, who will take the trouble and travel in Russia. They are what are called men who have cut their eye teeth. Their reputation begins from their boyhood, when they were much admired by their school-fellows, but for all that never escaped a sound thrashing occasionally. In their face, there is always something open, straightforward, if not impudent, to be seen. They soon succeed in ingratiating themselves, and ere you have had time to recover from your surprise they call you already "my dear fellow." They seem to establish their friendly relations for an eternity; but it will always happen that those who have been imprudent enough to form an intimacy with them, will, on the very evening of the day, at some friendly supper or rout, fall out with them. They are always very great talkers, hard drinkers, and what is termed, jolly good fellows, and with all that, men of prepossessing appearance.

Nosdrieff, at thirty-five years of age, was in all these talents as accomplished as he was when only eighteen or twenty; exceedingly fond

of dissipation. His marriage did not in the least interfere with his pleasures, nor change him, so much the less, since his wife, shortly after their marriage; quitted this world for a better one, leaving behind her two little children, which were of no earthly use or consolation to him. His infants, however, were properly taken care of by a housekeeper. He never could stay at home for more than twenty-four hours at a time. His sense of divination was so acute that he could smell at a distance of twenty or thirty miles where a fair was to be held, or a ball or rout to be given. In no time he was sure to be there, lead on a dispute, create a disturbance at the green table, because he, like other men of his description, had a passion for gambling. He was fond of card-playing, as we have seen already in the first chapter; and he did not play without a little cheating, because he knew so many different tricks and finesses, and for that very reason the game often ended in another sort of play; he either got a sound thrashing, or his full and glossy whiskers pulled about so much so, that very often he had to return home with only one of his hairy ornaments, and that even of a spare appearance.

But the constitution of his full and rosy cheeks was so excellent, that with an extraordinary fertility of growth, a new pair of whiskers soon made their appearance again, and even finer and stronger than the former.

But the strangest feature in his character was—and this could perhaps only happen in Russia—that a very short time after, he could coolly meet again the very same friends who had but recently horsewhipped him, and meet them as if nothing had been the matter between them; and as the phrase goes, *he* said nothing, and *they* said nothing about it.

Nosdrieff was in some respects also an historical personage. He never went to an evening party without there being some talk about him afterwards. Some event or another was sure to take place wherever he went; he would either be obliged to leave the room under an escort of strangers, or be forcibly led away by his own friends, who ventured to introduce him. If either of these cases did not happen, it might be depended upon that something else was sure to occur and make him notorious, and which to any other person

would not happen under any circumstances ; he would either get tipsy to such a degree as to do nothing else but laugh continually, or commit himself to such a degree that at last he will begin to blush at them himself.

Strange to say, he would try to impose upon persons without the least advantage to himself : he would of a sudden protest, that once he possessed a horse or a dog of a green or a blue colour, and such and similar nonsense ; so that those who have been listening to him, will leave him and say, " what falsehoods that man is telling, to be sure ! "

There are people, who have a passion for injuring their fellow-men frequently without any provocation. Some of us Russians, for an example, men of rank, of prepossessing appearance and with large decorations on their breasts, will often give you unquestionable assurances of friendship whilst pressing your hand warmly, speak to you about scientific things, which require deep study—and then, the very next moment, and in your presence, they will go and play you some base trick. And they will injure you as meanly as a man of the fifteenth degree



of the Russian nobility—which by the bye is the lowest, though this was not at all what you could have expected from a man wearing a star or two on his breast, discussing scientific things which require deep study and serious meditation. So great will your surprise be at his conduct, that you will remain abashed, shrug your shoulders, and say nothing.

Nosdrieff had exactly such a passion, whoever was the more acquainted or befriended by him, was sure to be the chosen victim of this despicable passion of his; he launched some of his monstrous nonsense, anything more stupid could scarcely be imagined, yet he succeeded either in breaking off some promise of marriage or some contract of sale, and what not; and in doing all that, he never called himself your enemy; on the contrary, if fate would have it, that you should meet him again, he would accost you like an old friend, and even say, "halloah! here you are at last, but you are not my dear fellow, because you never come to see me."

Nosdrieff was in many respects also a multifarious man, to use a common phrase, we may call him, a man up to anything and everything.

At the same instant he would propose to you, to go and drive wherever you like, if even to the end of the world, or in search of Sir John Franklin, then again he would be ready to enter into any speculation with you, exchange with you everything that could possibly be exchanged.—a rifle, a dog, a horse, not that he had any object of gain in it, not at all, it was simply another trait of his restless and foolish character.

If fate would have it so, that he might meet an inexperienced player or a flat at any of the towns or fairs which he used to visit, and that he should win of him his money in a gambling match, he would buy all and everything that would be first brought under his notice or be offered to him; he then purchased indiscriminately, horse-collars, perfumes, and neckerchiefs for the nurse of his children, a stallion, grapes, a silver mouth bason, Irish linen, buckwheat flour, tobacco, holster-pistols, Dutch herrings, oil paintings, mechanical instruments, pots and saucepans, boots, china tea-services—in fact, as long as his money lasted, he would continue his purchases.

However, it was a rare occurrence when any

of this great variety of articles were ever sent to his home; it happened nearly invariably that all these goods passed the very day of their purchase into the hands of some more fortunate gambler, very frequently even he would have to make the addition of his favourite Turkish pipe, with its amber mouth-piece and other ornaments, and he had even known extreme cases, when he had to part with his carriage, horses, and coachman, so that he, the master, was left behind, possessing for the time being nothing he could call his own but his clothes, running about to find some friend to give him a place in his carriage and drive him home—and this seems very much to have been the case with him in this instance, when he met with Tchichikoff at the inn.

Meanwhile, the three carriages had arrived before the gates of Nosedrieff's house. In the house there had been no preparations made for their reception. In the centre of the dining room there was a scaffolding on which two mouzhiks were standing, and whitewashing the wall and ceiling, whilst singing the tune of some interminable song. Nosedrieff immediately gave orders that the workmen as well as the scaffold-

ings should quit the room, and hastened into an adjoining apartment to give the necessary instructions to that effect. His guests heard him give his commands for the preparation of a dinner to his cook ; when this was audibly heard by Tchichikoff, he began to feel an appetite, as well as the conviction, that they should not be able to sit to table before five o'clock.

Nosdrieff, after returning to his guests offered to show them all and everything on his estate, and in his village ; and, in little more than two hours he had positively shown them everything worth seeing, so that there remained nothing else to be looked at. First of all they went to examine his stables, where they saw two mares, the one a grey silver-coloured animal, the other a chesnut one, then a black stallion, not a showy looking horse at all, but for which Nosdrieff swore that he had paid ten thousand roubles.

"You could never have paid ten thousand roubles for that animal," his brother-in-law ooserved coolly. "It is not worth even a thousand."

"By Heaven, I gave ten thousand for him," said Nosdrieff.

"You may invoke Heaven as a witness as

much as you like, I don't care," his fair-complexioned brother-in-law persisted.

"Very well then, let us have a wager about it," exclaimed Nosdrieff.

But his brother-in-law did not like to lay him a wager.

Nosdrieff then showed them some empty stalls, in which he used to keep excellent race-horses formerly. In the same stable they also saw a goat, who, according to a proverbial faith, was deemed indispensable in a stable near the horses, and it seemed that this goat was on excellent terms with his fellow-animals, for it walked about under their stomachs as if quite at home. After this, Nosdrieff led them away, showed them a young wolf, whom he kept tied to a pole.

"Here is a whelp," said he, "I feed him purposely with raw meat. I want to bring him up to become a perfect wild beast."

They then went to look at a pond, in which, according to Nosdrieff, there were such enormously large fish, that two men would have every difficulty in pulling out one of them.

In this, however, his brother seemed not inclined to contradict him.

"Tchichikoff, my dear fellow, come along, I'll show you a pair of beautiful dogs," said Nosedrieff, whilst leading on; "their muscular strength will amaze you, their power of scent is as sharp as—a needle!"

"Just look at that plain," said Nosedrieff, whilst pointing with his finger to a field before them, "there is such a number of hares that you can scarcely see the ground; I caught one the other day with my own hands by his hind legs."

"I venture to say, that you will never catch a hare with your hands!" observed his brother-in-law.

"But I tell you I caught one, and caught one purposely with my own hands!" answered Nosedrieff. "But now come along and I will show you, my dear fellow," he continued whilst turning towards Tchichikoff, "the frontier line of my estate."

When they had walked a considerable distance, they really arrived at the boundary mark of his estate, which consisted of a wooden post with a small board fixed to it.

"Here we are, at the frontier!" said Nosedrieff, "all, what you can possibly see on that

side, is mine, and even on the other side, all that extensive forest which looms there in the distance, and that, which is beyond the forest, all is mine."

"But since when has that forest become yours?" inquired his brother-in-law. "You have bought it lately? for it was not yours some time ago?"

"Just so; I bought it quite recently," answered Nosedrieff.

"How did you manage to buy it so quickly, so suddenly?"

"It's a fact, I bought it about three days ago, and the deuce, I paid a handsome price for it."

"But, if I remember well, you were just at that time at the fair?"

"Oh, what a simpleton you are! Is it then impossible to be at the same time at a fair, whilst buying a piece of land? Well, then, I was at the fair, whilst my manager bought the forest and land."

"Ah, your manager! that is another affair," said his brother-in-law, but even then he seemed to question the matter as a fact, and shook his head.

## CHAPTER XIX.

NOSDRIEFF's guests were obliged to return by the same wet and muddy road on which they came. When they had arrived at the house, Nosedrieff led them into his private cabinet, in which, however, there were no traces of such articles as one would expect to see in a private study : namely, books or papers ; the principal ornaments seemed to be a collection of swords, and two rifles, the one the value of about three hundred roubles, the other might have cost eight hundred. The brother-in-law looked around him, shook his head, but said nothing.

After this Nosedrieff exhibited some Turkish



daggers, upon the one of them was unfortunately the name of a celebrated Russian armourer of the name of Siberiakoff. The exhibition was concluded by a grinding organ, which the owner began to turn with the intention of entertaining his guests with some music. The organ had a rather pleasing tone, but there seemed to be something wrong with it, because the Mazurka which it was just playing ended with "The Marlborough March," and "Marlborough's March" again, was suddenly superseded by a mixture of one of Strauss' waltzes.

Nosdrieff had long since left off turning the handle, yet there seemed to be an obstinate flute in the organ, which would not cease to send forth a long and plaintive tone, which continued for some considerable time to whistle all by itself. To make up for this mishap, Nosdrieff produced his collection of pipes; there was a great variety of them, some of common red and white clay, some meerschaums already coloured, and some others quite new, some of them were carefully sown into doeskin, others again had no doeskin; he also showed

them some cherry tubes of great beauty and length, with amber mouth-pieces, and without any ; among those with mouth-pieces there was a very valuable one which he had but recently won in a raffle, he did not fail to boast of an embroidered tobacco-pouch, which he had received from a countess, whilst on his road to Smolensk, and who had fallen head over ears in love with him, and if we are to believe still further what he said about this adventure, the lady's hands were of such a beautiful shape that he could not find better words to express his appreciation of their perfection but by calling them "fatally superfine," which no doubt meant with him the highest degree of perfection.

After having shown all he possessed to his guests, he led them into the dining-room, where they took a small glass of liqueur to excite the appetite, and then sat down to dinner, considerably after five o'clock in the afternoon. A good dinner seemed not to be the first condition in the happy existence of Nosdrieff; a variety of dishes did not play a principal *rôle* upon his table; some of the eatables were too much roasted, whilst others

were not sufficiently cooked. It was obvious that his *chef de cuisine* was accustomed to a kind of freemasonry in his art, and that he had made up the dishes with the first comestibles that came under his hands or notice; if pepper was the nearest article in his reach, he would throw some pepper into the saucepan, if cabbage was at hand, he was sure to stuff the saucepan with cabbage, add some milk, ham, peas, in a word, everything was thrown pell-mell into the boiler, provided it was hot; as for the taste, he was sure that his cookery would have plenty of that.

To make up for any deficiencies of his cook, Nosedrieff stuck to the wine; soup was not yet served, when he had already supplied his guests with some port wine in two large tumblers, and some Haut Sauterne in two others, because in small provincial towns and country places they do not keep simple Sauterne. Nosedrieff then ordered his servant, Porphir—who served at table—to bring in a bottle of Madeira, of such an exquisite taste and dry quality that the Prince Field-Marshal Paskievitch would have been proud to taste it. The Madeira wine was really of a fiery taste, because the wine mer-

chants were too well acquainted with the taste of landed proprietors, who like a strong and dry glass of Madeira, and for that reason they mix it unmercifully with brandy, and sometimes even with the monopolised imperial raw spirit, in the hope that the excellent constitution of a Russian stomach will be able to digest it.

A little later, Nosedrieff ordered that another bottle should be brought in of some particularly good wine, which, according to his words, was both Burgundy and Champagne; this wine he poured out very freely to the right and to the left, to his brother-in-law and to Tchichikoff; Tchichikoff, however, observed with a side glance, that Nosedrieff had taken but little himself of his extra wine. This made him become very cautious, and, as soon as Nosedrieff seemed warmly engaged in conversation with his brother-in-law, he immediately took advantage of the opportunity to pour some of that extra wine into his plate.

In the course of dinner, a roast heath-cock was put upon the table, which, according to Nosedrieff, would have as mild a taste as cream, but which, to the surprise of his guests, had a positive taste of a badly cooked sea-gull. They

then tasted some French *beaume*, a sweet liqueur with such an extraordinary name that it was quite impossible to recollect it, for the host himself, called it the second time by a different appellation.

They had finished dining long since, and had been drinking all sorts of wine, yet the host and his guests remained seated at table. Tchichikoff did not like the idea of beginning a conversation with Nosdrieff, on his all-important subject, in the presence of his brother-in-law, whom he considered a stranger, and the matter on which he intended to speak to Nosdrieff demanded a private, confidential, and friendly interview.

However, the brother-in-law did not look like a dangerous man at the moment, because he seemed to have taken a copious libation, was moving to and fro in his chair, and continually twitching his nose with his left hand. He began to feel uneasy and as if he had a presentiment of an approaching hopeless condition; he at last begun to beg to be allowed to return home, but with such an idle and heavy voice, as if, to use a Russian phrase, "he was pulling a horse-collar upon the horse's neck with a pair of pincers."

"Oh, no, no, no! I shall not allow you to go!" said Nosedrieff.

"Pray do not offend me, my good friend, by detaining me, I really must leave you," his brother-in-law said, "you will very much offend me if you insist upon my staying any longer."

"Nonsense, folly! we will presently have a small game."

"Not I, my dear fellow, you may do as you like; my wife will have all sorts of ideas, I shall have to tell her of the fair. I really must give her some pleasant surprise after my long absence. No, oblige me, and do not try to keep me here any longer."

"Send your wife to the d—l! what's the use of your going home in your present state?"

"No, brother! she is such an excellent and virtuous wife; she is full of favours for me—would you believe me, I feel the tears coming into my eyes. No, do not keep me any longer, on my honour as a gentleman, I shall leave you, and I give you this assurance like an honest man."

"Let him depart, of what good could he be?" Tchichikoff whispered slowly to Nosedrieff.

"You are right, by Jove!" said Nosedrieff,

"I cannot bear the sight of these nervous fools!" and he added aloud, "well, the d—I be with you; go and make love to your better-half, you slave to gynæocracy!"

"No, brother, you ought not to call me by any of those foreign names," his brother-in-law replied, "as for my wife, I owe her my existence. She is an amiable and loving woman and is full of such tenderness—she often moves me to tears; no, the more I think of her the more I wish to return to her; she is sure to ask me what I have seen and done at the fair, and I shall have to tell her all, for she is an angel of a woman!"

"Be off then, and tell her as much as you like! there is your cap."

"Nay, brother Nosedrieff, you are wrong in wanting respect for your own sister; by committing a breach of politeness towards her, you offend me as well, and you know well what an amiable woman my wife is."

"Therefore, I cannot advise you better than to hasten into her arms as soon as you like, and sooner if possible!"

"Yes, brother, I must leave you, excuse me, but really I cannot stay any longer. My heart

would be rejoiced if I could stay, but I must not tarry any longer."

Nosdrieff's brother-in-law continued yet for a considerable time to express his regrets and excuses, without noticing that he had been already seated for some time in his own carriage, that he had long since departed from Nosdrieff's house, and that nothing but open fields and the high road were before him. It might be easily imagined, that his wife heard but little of what he had seen and done at the fair.



## CHAPTER XX.

"WHAT a stupid fellow!" said Nosedrieff, whilst standing at the window and looking after his brother-in-law's carriage as it was gradually disappearing in the distance. "Look here how he is driving off; one of his off horses is rather a fine animal, I have long had my eye upon it. However, it is quite impossible to come to any understanding with the man. He is such an odd fellow."

After saying this, Nosedrieff and Tchichikoff entered another room. Porphir brought in some candles, and Tchichikoff observed in the hands of his host a pack of cards, for the sudden appearance of which he could not possibly account.

"What do you say, my dear fellow," Nosedrieff remarked, whilst pressing the back of the pack with his fingers in such a manner, that they got slightly bent, and the wrapper in which they were broke. "Now then, and in order to pass our time pleasantly, I propose to hold the bank with three hundred roubles in it."

But Tchichikoff pretended not to have heard the other's proposal, and said, as if suddenly recollecting something: "Ah! by the bye, and ere I forget it again; I have request to make."

"What is it?"

"Give me first your promise to fulfil it."

"But what is your request?"

"Never mind, give me your promise!"

"'Tis granted."

"Your word of honour."

"My word of honour."

"And now hear my request: you have no doubt, my dear fellow, a number of dead serfs, that have not been yet struck out from the lists of the last census?"

"Yes, I have; but why?"

"Transfer them to me, to my name."

"And for what purpose do you want them?"

"Suffice it, if I tell you I want them."

"But for what purpose?"

"As I told you before I want them; the rest is my business, in a word then, I want to have them."

"No doubt you are up to something. Come, old fellow, confess it, eh?"

"To what should I be up? how could I be up to anything with such worthless trash, as dead serfs?"

"But why should you then tell me you want to have them?"

"Oh, what a curious fellow you are! you wish to touch everything, or rather thrash with your own hands, and smell at it besides!"

"But why don't you tell me?"

"And where would be the advantage if you knew it? well then if you must know it, it is a sudden fancy I have."

"Well then, look here, my dear fellow: unless you tell me the truth, you shall not have my dead serfs!"

"And now I must confess, that this is not

honourable on your part : you gave me your word of honour, and now you try to back out of it."

"As you like, my dear fellow, but you shall not have them unless you tell me of what use they could be to you, dead as they are."

"What shall I tell him," said Tchichikoff to himself, and after a moment's reflection, stated, that he wanted those dead serfs for the purpose of gaining a greater influence in society, that he did not possess a large property, and that until his fortunes changed these dead serfs would be a consolation to him.

"Stuff, nonsense !" said Nosedrieff, not giving him even proper time to finish his phrase, "bosh, my dear fellow !"

Tchichikoff could not help making the observation to himself, that his invention was far from being clever, and that the pretence was a very weak one indeed.

"Well then, I will be more explicit," said he, whilst recovering himself from his first defeat, "but pray do not betray me in letting it out. I have come to the resolution of getting married ; but I must tell you that the parents of my intended are very ambitious persons.

"Tis quite a bore to me. I am sorry even that I gave my promise ; they insist that the future husband of their daughter should absolutely have, at least, three hundred serfs to call his own, and as I am short of the round sum of hundred and fifty, I thought . . . ."

" Bosh ! bosh !" Nosedrieff shouted again.

" Now, my dear fellow," said Tchichikoff, " in telling you this much, I have spoken the truth, there is not even this much of imposition in what I told you," and here he showed the extremest point of his little finger.

" I lay my head, that you told me a falsehood."

" This is offensive in reality ! what do you take me for ? And why should I absolutely tell a falsehood ?"

" 'Tis all very fine, my dear fellow, but I know you ; you are a gay deceiver. Allow me to tell you something between ourselves, and quite confidentially. If I was your commander-in-chief, I should have you hanged on the first and nearest tree."

Tchichikoff felt shocked and offended at this remark, for every observation, however slightly uncivil or offensive to propriety, was

highly disagreeable to him. He avoided as much as possible allowing any familiarities to be taken with him, and in extreme cases would only permit such to be taken as might be termed the most delicate. And for that reason, he was now deeply offended, and sensibly hurt at the observation made by Nosedrieff.

"By heaven I should have you hanged," repeated Nosedrieff, "I tell you this candidly, not with the intention of offending you; oh no! but simply, friendly and confidentially."

"Every thing has its limits," said Tchichikoff, with an air of dignity. "If you like to boast in such language, I would advise you to go into a barrack;" and then he added, "if you don't like to let me have them for nothing, well then sell me them."

"Sell them! but I know you well, you are a gay deceiver. You will not offer me a fair price for them?"

"Eh! you are a fine bird too! look at them! what are they to you. Do you value them like diamonds?"

"It is as I thought, when I told you that I knew you."

"Pardon me, my dear fellow, but you have

quite Jewish inclinations. You ought to let me have them for nothing."

"Now then, listen, in order to show you how far you are mistaken in me, and that I am no selfish animal, I shall take nothing for my dead serfs. Buy my stallion of me, and I'll give them to you into the bargain."

"But, my dear fellow, what am I to do with a stallion?" said Tchichikoff, quite bewildered by such a proposal.

"What to do? But remember, my dear fellow, I paid ten thousand roubles for the animal, and I'll let you have him for only four thousand."

"But of what use could a stallion be to me? I do not keep a horse-breeding institution, like his most glorious Majesty our Emperor does."

"But, my dear fellow, you seem not to understand me. I'll only take three thousand roubles of you now, and as for the remaining thousand, you may pay me later at your own convenience."

"But I do not want your stallion, nor any one else's. Heaven be with the whole race!"

"Well, will you buy my hunter, the grey mare?"

" I do not want a mare either."

" For that mare, and the other grey horse you have seen in my stables, I'll only take three thousand roubles from you."

" But I do not want any horses."

" You may sell them. You are sure to get at any fair, or sale, more than three times their present value."

" Then it would be better for you to sell them yourself, if you are convinced you could get as much as three times their value."

" I am sure, I could make as much, but I wish you to derive that benefit."

Tchichikoff thanked him for the friendly intention, but obstinately refused either to have the grey mare, or the grey horse.

" Well then, will you buy some of my dogs? I'll sell you a pair with a skin as smooth as a thirty degrees frost! a spotted pair with moustachios, and upstanding hair like a pig's bristles, the roundness of their ribs is quite incomprehensible, their paws are swiftness itself, they scarcely touch the ground."

" Of what use could dogs be to me? I am not a sportsman."

" But I wish you to have some dogs. Very



well, if you won't have any of my dogs, you ought to buy my organ, it is a most wonderful instrument; on my word of honour, it has cost me more than one thousand five hundred roubles; but you shall have it for nine hundred."

"But what am I to do with an organ? I am not a German, that I should go dragging it along, and grinding it in the streets, whilst begging the passers by for alms."

"But, my dear fellow, you are mistaken, it is not an organ like the Germans carry about, it is a regular, really musical organ; just come along and look at it, it is all of mahogany. I'll show it you once more."

Hereupon Nosedrieff seized Tchichikoff by the hand, and began to pull him into the next room, and however much the other resisted by stemming his feet against the floor, and as well by persuading him that he perfectly well recollected the organ, it was of no use, and he was obliged to listen once more to the tune of Marlborough's march, and Strauss' familiar valse.

"If you don't wish to make a bargain for all cash, then listen to what I propose to you. I'll give you this organ, and as many dead serfs as I have got, and you will give me in return

your britchka, and three hundred roubles in hard cash."

"What an idea! and pray, in what am I to drive home?"

"I'll give you another britchka. Come, let us go to the coach-house, I'll show it to you! You will only have to paint it afresh and it will be an excellent carriage."

"Oh, good heaven, it seems the devil has possessed him!" thought Tchichikoff within himself, and he came to the resolution, whatever the consequences might be, to decline all descriptions of britchkas, organs, and all imaginable breeds of dogs, without regard to their incomprehensible swiftness and smell.

"And, remember," added Nosedrieff, "I offer you a britchka, an organ, and all my dead serfs, the whole in a batch!"

"I won't have them!" Tchichikoff exclaimed once more.

"Why won't you have them then?"

"Simply because I won't have them, and there is an end."

"What a curious fellow you are; it would seem it is quite impossible to live on friendly terms with you, as is customary among good

comrades, you are such an obstinate fellow ! It is evident you are a deceitful man !”

“ But for what do you take me, surely not for a fool ? just reflect for a moment : why should I make the acquisition of such things as are of no earthly use whatever to me ?”

“ Pray don't talk. I know you now perfectly well. You are a regular box of antiquities ! However, listen to me, will you play faro ? I'll stake all my dead serfs on a card, and my organ in the bargain.”

“ Well, to venture a game, means to expose oneself to uncertainties,” spoke Tchichikoff, and meanwhile he kept glancing stealthily at the pack of cards which Nosedrieff had taken in his hands again. The cards seemed to him to be of an artificial make, and the corners looked very suspicious.

“ What do you mean by uncertainties ?” demanded Nosedrieff. “ There cannot be the least uncertainty, provided only fortune smiles on you, you may win enormously. Look here ! what luck ! said he,” as he commenced the game of faro, in the hope of exciting a gambling passion in his guest. “ What a chance ! what luck ! look here : thus you might win in

reality! there is the confounded nine, upon which I lost all. I had a presentiment, that this card would sell my luck, and closing my eyes, I thought to myself: I am sold if that confounded card turns up."

As Nosdrieff spoke thus, Porphir entered with a fresh bottle.

But Tchichikoff positively refused either to play or to drink.

"But why won't you play at least?" demanded Nosdrieff.

"Because I am not in the humour. And besides, I must confess I am not partial to gambling."

"Why, how is this, you are not fond of gambling?"

Tchichikoff shrugged his shoulders, and added: "just so, I am not an amateur."

"You are a precious fool!"

"I can't help that, Heaven has made me so."

"You are a regular humbug! Till now, I was under the impression that you were a reputable man in some respects, but now I plainly perceive that you have not the slightest sense of propriety and good manners. It is impossible

to speak to you as one would speak to a friend. You have no candour, no straightforwardness ; you are the image of Sobakevitch, you are like him, a regular sneaking fellow !”

“ But why do you scold me and call me all sorts of names ? Is it my fault if I don’t like gambling ? And if you are such a man as to value such a trash as your dead serfs are, well then, sell them to me, name your price.”

“ Since you are such a mean fellow, you shall not have them at all ! Originally, I intended to present them to you as a token of my friendship, gratuitously, but now you shall not have them at any price ! Nay, were you even to offer me a kingdom, I would not part with them. You are a shuffler, a wretched potter ! From this very moment, I won’t speak another word with you. Porphir, go and tell my stable-boy not to give any oats to his horses, let them feed on dry hay.”

The latter determination of Nosdrieff’s, Tchichikoff was far from anticipating.

“ Now I could wish I had never seen you before,” added Nosdrieff.

Regardless of this altercation between them, the guest and his host nevertheless sat down

and took supper together, although this time there were no wines with inexpressible names put on the table. The only bottle that passed between them was a bottle of Kahetian wine, which possessed all the peculiarities of a green and sour vinegar beverage. After a silent supper, Nosedrieff led Tchichikoff into a small adjoining room in which a bed had been prepared for him.

“Here is your bed ; I do not wish you even a good night’s rest !”

## CHAPTER XXI.

TCHICHIKOFF remained after Nosedrieff's departure in the most unpleasant frame of mind. He was inwardly angry with himself; he scolded himself for having accepted Nosedrieff's invitation, and thus uselessly losing his time. But what vexed him most was that he had imprudently begun to speak of his all-important object, like a child, like a fool; because this business was not of a nature to be entrusted to Nosedrieff—Nosedrieff, a man without any worth or sense; he could compromise him, he could tell stories, make additions, and spread, heaven knows what calumnies about, and thus place him in the greatest difficulties—it was neither

right nor well ! “ I have made a regular ass of myself,” said he to himself.

He spent a very sleepless night. Some very small, but also very daring insects, kept biting him unmercifully, so much so, that he could not help scratching the wounded spots, and prompted by utter agony, adding each time, “ I wish you to the devil and your master, Nosdrieff, as well !” After a very short but sound slumber, he awoke very early the next morning. The first occupation he undertook was to slip into a morning-gown and into his boots, he then went across the court-yard into the stable, and ordered Selifan to put the horses immediately in his britchka. On returning from the stable he met Nosdrieff, who made his appearance also in a long morning-gown, and with a Turkish pipe in his mouth.

Nosdrieff accosted him in a friendly manner, and inquired how he had passed the night.

“ Tolerably,” answered Tchichikoff, rather dryly.

“ And I, my dear fellow,” continued Nosdrieff, “ I have passed a most wretched night, I have been victimised by an army of insects, and I now feel as if I had been sleeping in a barrack.



Imagine, I dreamt that I had been regularly horsewhipped, yes, truly, and by whom do you think? This you will never guess; by my intimate friends, Colonel Pozelueff and Lieutenant Kuvschinikoff."

"Yes," thought Tchichikoff to himself, "it would be an excellent thing if you were to receive a thrashing in reality."

"By heaven, and it feels painful even now! When I awoke I really felt pains all over me, and such an unpleasant itching, no doubt the confounded fleas have again been at me. You had better go now and dress yourself, and I will be with you almost immediately. I have only to go and scold my manager, the rogue."

Tchichikoff went into his room to wash and dress himself. When he had done so, he entered the dining-room, where he found the table laid with a tea service and a bottle of brandy. In this room, his eyes also met with the remains of the dinner and supper of the preceding day; it seemed as if the broom had not made its appearance there; the floor was strewn with bread crumbs, and tobacco ashes were even still lying on the table cloth.

The host himself did not fail to make his

appearance soon after ; he had no other dress on him but a loose Turkish morning-gown, which rather displayed than concealed his broad chest, upon which a regular beard seemed to grow freely. Holding in one hand his long Turkish pipe and in the other a cup of tea, he would have made a characteristic subject for a painter, who hates gentlemen of propriety, with curled hair, like a hairdresser's sign-board, or a head shorn *à la diable m'emporte*.

"Now then, what are you thinking about?" said Nodsrieff, after a momentary silence, "will you, or will you not play for my dead serfs?"

"My dear fellow, I have already told you once for all, I won't play, but if you like I am ready to buy them."

"I won't sell them, because it would not be acting in a friendly manner towards you ; but I'm still disposed to play for them as long as you like. Come, let us have a turn, if but one only !"

"As I told you before, no."

"And you won't barter, either?"

"No, I won't."

"Now, listen and don't be so obstinate, let us have a game of draughts, if you win they shall

all be yours ; and, I remember now that I have got a number of dead serfs, that ought to be struck out from the census list of the living. Holloa, Porphir, bring me the draught-board here."

"'Tis a useless trouble, I shall not play."

"But that is not playing at cards ; there can be no chance or shuffling ; all depends upon ingenuity. I must even tell you beforehand, that I am no player at all, and that you might as well give me a price in advance."

Tchichikoff thought to himself, "Well, I'll venture to play a game with him ! I used to play once at draughts tolerably well, besides, there is no chance for him to cheat. Very well, then, in order to oblige you I'll play you a game."

"My dead serfs against a hundred roubles."

"Why ? it will be high enough, if I lay fifty against them ?"

"No, fifty roubles is quite a ridiculous stake. I would rather, in order to make up a round sum, include a couple of my thorough-bred dogs, or a gold watch-guard."

"Very well," Tchichikoff answered.

"How many draughtsmen will you give me in advance?" demanded Nosdrieff.

"How did you come upon this idea? certainly none."

"At least give me the two first moves."

"No, I won't, I am a bad player myself."

"I believe you, my boy, you and a bad player!" exclaimed Nosdrieff, whilst pushing forward a draughtsman.

"I have not played draughts for a long while," said Tchichikoff, whilst also advancing a draughtsman.

"I believe you, my boy, you and a bad player," said Nosdrieff, pushing forward another draughtsman.

"I have not been playing for a very long while," Tchichikoff said, also advancing a draughtsman.

"I believe you, my boy, you and a bad player," said Nosdrieff, whilst again moving a draughtsman, and at the same time he advanced a second one with the sleeve of his Turkish morning-gown.

"'Tis long ago since I took them last in my hands—oh, eh! my dear fellow, what is this? put that back!" said Tchichikoff.

“What?”

“This draughtsman there,” said Tchichikoff, but at the same time he saw another before his very nose, ready to enter and become a king, but from where it came, and how it could have so suddenly advanced, it was impossible for Tchichikoff to account. “No,” said Tchichikoff, rising from table, “it is impossible to play with you! To advance three draughtsmen at once is against the rules of the game altogether.”

“How do you mean, three men at once? That was a mistake. One of them might have advanced accidentally, I’ll move it back if you like.”

“But where does that other come from?”

“Which other?”

“This one here, ready to become a king.”

“Well, I’m sure, don’t you recollect it?”

“Certainly not, my dear fellow, I have noticed every move, and I remember them all; you have only just now advanced it. Its place is here.”

“How, where is its place?” said Nosedrieff, blushing deeply, “but, my dear fellow, it seems to me that you would like to take me in.”

“No, not I, my dear fellow, but it is evident

that you want to do so with me, only you are rather unsuccessful."

"For whom do you take me?" said Nosedrieff, "do you think that I could be capable of shuffling?"

"I do not take you for anybody, but from henceforth I shall never play with you again."

"But stop, you can't back out of this game, you have began it, you must play it out," said Nosedrieff hotly.

"I have the right to refuse, because you have not been playing as it becomes a gentleman."

"You lie, for you cannot prove it!"

"No, my dear fellow, it's you who are the liar!"

"I have not been shuffling, you dare not refuse to continue, and you must finish the game."

"You cannot compel me to do that," said Tchichikoff coolly, and approaching the table, he upset the draughtsmen.

Nosedrieff jumped from his seat in a rage, and drew so close to Tchichikoff that he made him step back two paces.

"I shall oblige you to play it out. It matters little, that the draughtsmen are mixed. I remember every move. We will arrange them again as they were."

"No, my dear fellow, there is an end to it, I shall not play with you."

"Then you positively refuse to finish the game?"

"You must allow yourself that it is impossible to play with you."

"Now, you obstinate fellow, tell me once more, will you or will you not play?" spoke Nosedrieff wildly, whilst walking still closer up to Tchichikoff.

"I will not!" Tchichikoff exclaimed, but at the same time he raised his hands towards his face ready for any contingency, because the matter threatened to become rather hot. This precaution was taken in good time, because Nosedrieff in his excitement had raised his hand, and it might easily have happened, that one of the full and agreeable cheeks of our hero, would have been covered with dishonour, which could not be washed away; but he fortunately succeeded in escaping the blow, and seized the

madly infuriated Nosedrieff by both hands, and held him tightly.

“Porphir! Ivan!” shouted Nosedrieff in his madness, whilst striving to liberate himself from Tchichikoff’s powerful grasp.

Hearing these names, Tchichikoff, in order not to have the servants witnesses to a scandalous scene, and feeling convinced also, that to holding Nosedrieff any longer would be of no advantage to him, he let loose his hands. At that same moment, Porphir entered the room followed by Ivan, a herculean looking fellow, with whom it would not have been advisable to pick a quarrel.

“Then you refuse to finish the game?” said Nosedrieff. “Give me a positive answer quickly, you obstinate blockhead!”

“It is impossible to finish the game,” answered Tchichikoff, and looked out of the window at the same time; he beheld his britchka, which was standing there quite ready, and Selifan seemed to wait but for a signal to drive up to the door; but it was impossible for Tchichikoff to leave the room, the door was guarded by two powerful slaves and tools of Nosedrieff’s.



"Then you positively refuse to finish the game?" demanded again Nosdrieff, with a face as red hot as fire.

"If you had been playing as becomes a gentleman, I would have finished it, but now I cannot."

"Ah! you say you cannot, you humbug, when you see that you are likely to lose the game, then it is that you cannot play! Horse-whip him," he shouted, in a hoarse and infuriated voice, whilst turning towards Porphir and Ivan, and seizing himself a long cherry pipe tube. Tchichikoff became as pale and white as a sheet. He had evidently an intention to say something, but he felt, that his lips moved without speaking a word.

"Horsewhip him!" Nosdrieff again shouted, rushing forward, with the cherry tube uplifted in his hand, all excited and perspiring, as if he was about to storm an impregnable fortress. "Beat him!" he shouted in the same voice with which, in the heat of an onset some valorous lieutenant would address his men and say, "forward, children," and whose daring has become so well known throughout the regiment, that special orders are always given that he

should be kept back with the rear guard, whenever an action of importance is undertaken.

But the fortress, against which Nosdrieff was storming, was far from being impregnable, on the contrary, its outworks betrayed her inward weakness, and its fear was so great, that the commander-in-chief—the soul—went to hide himself in his heels.

The chair with which Tchichikoff attempted to defend himself, was wrenched from his hands by Nosdrieff's serfs, and bereft of this last hope he closed his eyes and felt neither dead nor alive, yet he tried to grasp once more at the Tcherkessian pipe of his brutal host, and heaven knows, what the consequences might have been. But providence seemed to pity the position as well as the ribs, shoulders, and all the well-formed portions of our hero.

At this unexpected yet opportune moment, the sounds of post-horse bells were heard loudly ringing in the court-yard, and the wheels of a carriage rolled quickly over the stones before the entrance of the house. It was a telega, drawn by three horses, that had arrived so suddenly; shortly after, heavy footsteps were heard quickly approaching the room in which the actors of

our present narrative were so dramatically collected.

They all looked involuntarily out of the window ; and beheld a stranger in moustachios, dressed in a half military and half plain coat, alighting from the telega. Having taken his information in the anteroom, he entered at the very moment when Tchichikoff had not yet recovered from his stupefaction, and when he was in the most pitiable position in which a mortal man can possibly be.

“Allow me to ask which of you two gentlemen is Mr. Nosedrieff,” said the stranger, looking with some astonishment at Nosedrieff, who stood there with the cherry pipe tube in his uplifted hand, and then at Tchichikoff, who had scarcely begun to recover from his disadvantageous position.

“Allow me first to ask you with whom I have the honour of speaking ?” said Nosedrieff, whilst approaching the stranger.

“I am a commissioner of the military police.”

“And what do you wish ?”

“I come to inform you that in obedience to higher commands, I shall consider you my

prisoner until proper inquiries will have been instituted into the affair in which you are compromised."

"What nonsense! What affair do you mean?" demanded Nosedrieff.

"You were inculpated in an affair, or rather a riot, in which a certain lieutenant of the guards, by name Maksimoff was insulted and even horsewhipped, whilst in a state of intoxication."

"That is perfectly false, Sir! I never saw in the whole course of my life your lieutenant Maksimoff,"

"My dear Sir, allow me to inform you that I am an officer. You may call your servants liars but not me."

Tchichikoff did not wait to hear what Nosedrieff would reply to this observation, but seized his cap, passed stealthily behind the back of the commissary of the military police, and left the room. He was soon seated in his britchka, and ordered Selifan to drive off as fast as his horses could gallop.

## CHAPTER XXII.

OUR hero was still considerably terrified at the thought of his narrow escape. Although the britchka was literally flying at a fearful speed, and Nosedrieff's village nearly lost in the distance, hidden by fields, slopes and hills, yet he still continued to turn round, and cast glances of terror behind him, as if expecting to see suddenly his pursuers.

His breathing was short and interrupted, and when he laid his hand upon his broad breast to feel the beating of his heart, he felt it throbbing like that of a quail in a cage.

"Oh ! what a regular shower-bath ! How could I ever expect that of the fellow !" Such

exclamations were followed by a variety of difficult and strong wishes for the future of Nosedrieff, and were concluded by epithets certainly not of the choicest language.

"Say what I may," Tchichikoff remarked confidentially to himself, "without the sudden appearance of the commissioner of the military police, I might at this present moment be one less among the living in this world! I should have disappeared like a bubble on the ocean, without leaving a trace behind me, no heirs or children to inherit my honourable name, my modest fortune!" Our hero seemed very anxious and concerned about his successors.

"What a nasty gentleman!" thought Selifan. "I have never seen such an ill-disposed man before. He deserves to be despised. I could rather see a man without food, but a horse must be fed because a horse likes oats. That is the proper food for his maintenance. What meat is to us, so is oats to the horse, and that is the proper food for horses."

The horses also seemed to have a bad opinion of Nosedrieff; not only the leader and the brown horse, but even the tiger-spotted idler seemed

to be in bad humour. Although the idler was used to receive less good oats generally, and was also accustomed never to have them given to him by Selifan, without being previously called a rogue, yet in this instance he seemed quite disgusted ; for notwithstanding the scolding he received his fair portion of oats, and not as now, common hay ; he used to eat his bad oats with pleasure, and after, even put his enormous head into the crib of his comrades to see what good things they were enjoying. This he did especially when Selifan was not in the stable ; but now they had had nothing else but hay, that was bad ; all three were dissatisfied.

But soon after, the whole batch of malcontents were suddenly and unexpectedly interrupted in the effusion of their wrath against Nosdrieff in an unexpected manner. All, not excluding even the coachman, recovered and came to their senses again, when they felt themselves in contact with a travelling-carriage, drawn by six powerful horses, and heard the shrieks of ladies sitting inside, and the scolding and swearing of the strange coachman.

“ Oh, you scoundrel ! did I not shout to you

as loudly as possible ! Turn to the right, you crow ! Are you drunk, or what else is the matter with you ?”

Selifan felt at once that he was on the wrong side, but as a Russian does not like to acknowledge his error before another, he therefore shouted forth his reply with an air of importance :

“ And what do you mean by driving like a madman ? Have you, perhaps, left your eyes in pawn at a dram-shop ?”

After having spoken thus, he endeavoured to back his britchka, trying to liberate his horses, which had become entangled with those of the other carriage ; however, he only succeeded in making things worse.

The ladies sitting in the carriage looked at the scene of confusion before them with the utmost terror expressed upon their faces. The one was an elderly lady ; the other, a young person about sixteen years of age, with golden ringlets, very tastefully arranged around a pretty face and head. The charming oval of her face was as evenly formed as a new-laid egg, and, like it, it possessed that peculiar transparent whiteness which is only to be seen in a new-laid



egg, when held up towards the light by the gentle hand of a clever housekeeper, who is examining its freshness by allowing the rays of the sun to shine through it; her finely-shaped ears seemed also equally transparent, and were intersected by warmly-flowing veins. From the sudden fright, her rosy lips had opened to display a range of ivory teeth, and tears were sparkling in her eyes. All this was so charming in her, that our hero glanced at her for some moments quite motionless, and paying no attention whatever to the dispute which had arisen between the two coachmen and their horses.

“Will you back your horses, you Novgorodian crow?” shouted the strange coachman.

Selifan tugged at his reins; the strange driver did as much, and the horses, in obedience to the impulse, retreated a little, and then came into contact again, were anew entangled, and the confusion was greater than before.

While the confusion was thus growing worse confounded, some peasants began to gather round the carriages and horses; they came running as fast as they could from an adjoining village; and as such a sight is for a Russian

peasant like a Christmas-box, or like a newspaper and a glass of stout would be to an Englishman, so but little time elapsed before the carriages were both surrounded by a few hundred gaping mouzhiks, and the village was left to the care of only old women and young children. The entangled traces were soon cut; a few heavy blows applied to the head of the tiger-spotted idler made him retreat; in a word, the horses were soon separated and led aside.

The interest and the curiosity of the gaping peasants rose to an incredible degree. Every one of them was anxious to give an advice or a suggestion :

“ You go, Andrushka, and lead that front horse a little about, the one that is standing on the right-hand side from us; and Uncle Mitja would do well to mount the tiger-spotted animal! Get on his back, Mitja!”

During the time that Selifan and the strange coachman were arranging the traces of their respective horses, Tchichikoff had continued to look very attentively at the young lady stranger. He made an attempt to address her several times, but, somehow or another, he thought there was no favourable opportunity. Mean-

while, the ladies drove off, the pretty head, and face with the fine outlines, the slender figure, all disappeared like an apparition; and there remained nothing but the high-road, the britchka, the three horses already familiar to our reader, Selifan, and the level and empty fields surrounding them.

“A charming little woman!” said he, whilst opening his snuff-box, and taking a pinch of snuff. “But what is the most handsome thing about her? It is pleasant to see, that she seems just to have left a boarding-school, or some such institution, and that there is yet nothing womanly, or rather matronly about her, and that is one of the most unpleasing features in the sex. She is still like a child, all in her is still natural, she will speak what she thinks, she will laugh at every thing that pleases her. She might yet be taught any thing and every thing, she might become an accomplished and virtuous woman, and she might also turn out the very contrary. If she now happens to come under the control and advice of her mother or aunts, then farewell natural innocence! In a year they will have changed her so completely by instilling into her, what they are pleased to

term the dignities of a woman, that her own father will have every difficulty to recognise, in that young person, his own daughter.

“From the elder ladies, she will derive conceit-  
edness and affected manners, move about accord-  
ing to the dictates of fashion, torment her  
brains to know, with whom, about what, and  
how much she might venture to speak, and  
especially how to look at them; every moment  
she will be alarmed lest she should speak more  
than is strictly necessary. At last, she will be-  
come confused from so much unnatural exer-  
tion, and dissimulation will become natural to  
her, and then—heaven knows what she may  
come to next!”

Having spoken thus much to himself, Tchi-  
chikoff remained silent for some moments, and  
then he added:

“It would be rather satisfactory to know who  
she is? Yes, what her father might be? Is  
he perhaps a rich landed proprietor of high res-  
pectability, or simply a respectable man with a  
large fortune acquired in serving his country?  
Because, let me suppose, that this pretty little  
girl receives but five thousand roubles as a  
marriage gift, she would become a most accept-

able, nay a very enticing little woman. And this would constitute, so to say, the happiness of a respectable man."

The sum of five thousand roubles represented itself so attractively to his mind, that he began to scold himself inwardly for not having obtained some information about who the ladies were from their coachman, during the time that the confusion among the horses lasted. Soon after, however, the appearance of Sobakevitch's village began to distract his attention from the ladies, and he returned to his friend and more serious purposes.

The village seemed to him tolerably large, and even of importance; there were two forests, the one of birch-trees, the other of pines, the one of a gay colour, the other dark, spread out like wings on the right and left of the village; in the centre of it stood a large wooden building with a balcony, a roof with red tiles, and dark grey painted walls, the style of architecture reminding one of a barrack, or the primitive buildings of German emigrants.

It was evident that the builder of this house must have been in continual opposition to the taste of the owner. The builder was a pedant,

and adhered to symmetry, the owner preferred conformity to the purpose, and, thus it seemed that in consequence of the differences of taste, the lawful lord of the mansion had blocked up the windows of the whole of one of the fronts of the house, and left only a small aperture instead, no doubt to serve as a skylight to some lumber-room.

The principal entrance to the house stood by no means in the centre, notwithstanding the good intents of the architect, because the owner of it had ordered one of the side columns to be removed and thus the principal entrance did not display as originally intended four columns, but only three. The whole of the court-yard was enclosed by a strong and unusually thick wooden wall. The proprietor seemed to have been particularly concerned about everything being of the greatest possible durability.

Upon the construction of his stables, pent-house and kitchen, he had employed full grown and heavy logs calculated to last an eternity. The houses of his peasants in the village were also of a wonderfully strong and lasting construction, they nowhere displayed any of the common gingerbread ornaments, but every one

of them was a solid mass of logs of wood. Even the wall was enclosed by such large stems of fir as would only be employed as sleepers for a railway, or in the construction of ships. In a word, upon whatever kind of building Tchichikoff happened to cast a glance, his sight met with a *pièce de résistance*, unmistakable, presenting a durable but clumsy appearance.

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